

The Princess and other Poems

BY

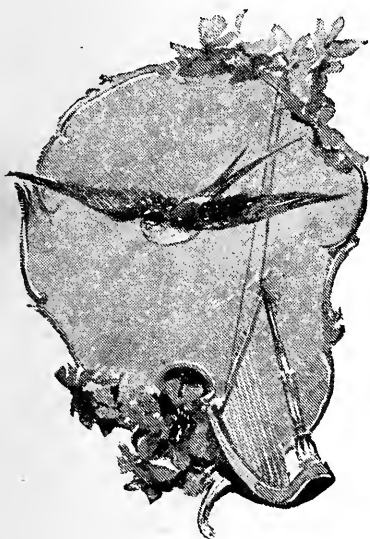
Alfred Lord Tennyson

POET LAUREATE

*VIGNETTE EDITION. WITH ONE HUNDRED
NEW ILLUSTRATIONS*

BY

Charles Howard Johnson



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THE PRINCESS ; A MEDLEY.



PROLOGUE.

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns until the set of sun
Up to the people : thither flocked at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighboring borough with their Institute
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son,— the son
A Walter too,— with others of our set,
Five others : we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house,
Greek, set with busts : from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their
names,
Grew side by side ; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time ;
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together ; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And "this," he said, "was Hugh's at Agincourt;
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon:
A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him"—which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings
Who laid about them at their wills and died;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

' O miracle of women ' said the book,
" O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost—
Her stature more than mortal in the burst
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire—
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,
She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall,
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook!
O miracle of noble womanhood!"



"THITHER FLOCK'D AT NOON."

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;
And, I all rapt in this, ' Come out,' he said,
" To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth



" A MAN WITH KNOBS AND WIRES AND VIALS FIRED A
CANNON."

And sister Lilia with the rest." We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park : strange was the sight to me

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads,
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope,
The fountain of the moment, playing, now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired
A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes
For azure views ; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter : round the lake
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied
And shook the lilies : perch'd about the knolls
A dozen angry models jetted steam :
A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon
Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past :
And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations ; so that sport
Went hand in hand with Science ; otherwhere
Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead

The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;
And long we gazed, but satiated at length
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within
The sward was trim as any garden lawn :
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
From neighbour seats: and there was Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport,
Half child half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony he'lm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them : then the maiden Aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told
Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breath'd the Proctor's dogs ; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ;
And one the Master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought
My book to mind : and opening this I read
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and "Where,"
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay
Beside him) "lives there such a woman now?"

Quick answer'd Lilia "There are thousands now
Such women, but convention beats them down :
It is but bringing up ; no more than that :
You men have done it : how I hate you all !
Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
That love to keep us children ! O I wish
That I were some great princess, I would build
Far off from men a college like a man's,
And I would teach them all that men are taught ;
We are twice as quick !" And here she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling "Pretty were the sight
If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt
With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear,
If there were many Lilias in the brood,

However deep you might embower the nest,
Some boy would spy it."

At this upon the sword
She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :
"That's your light way ; but I would make it death
For any male thing but to peep at us."

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make her, she :
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her,
And "petty Ogress," and "ungrateful Puss,"
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ;
They lost their weeks ; they vexed the souls of deans ;
They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.

"True," she said,
"We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did "

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. "Doubt my word again !" he said.

"Come, listen ! here is proof that you were miss'd :
 We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;
 And there we took one tutor as to read :
 The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
 Were out of season : never man, I think,
 So moulder'd in a sinecure as he :
 For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls —
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home —
 As many little trifling Lilies — play'd
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and
 how,
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas."

She remember'd that :
 A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these — what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves?

A half-disdain

Perch'd on the pouted blossoms of her lips :
 And Walter nodded at me ; "*He* began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn ; and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind? what kind?
 Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill
 Time by the fire in winter."

"Kill him now,
 The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,"

Said Lilia ; " Why not now ? " the maiden Aunt.
 " Why not a summer's as a winter's tale ?
 A tale for summer as befits the time,
 And something it should be to suit the place,
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
 Grave, solemn ! "

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh'd
 And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth
 An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,
 Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden Aunt
 (A little sense of wrong had touch'd her face
 With color) turn'd to me with " As you will ;
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,
 Or be yourself your hero if you will. "

" Take Lilia, then, for heroine " clamour'd he,
 " And make her some great princess, six feet high,
 Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you
 The Prince to win her ! "

" Then follow me, the Prince, "
 I answer'd, " each be hero in his turn !
 Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream.—
 Heroic seems our Princess as required —
 But something made to suit with Time and place,
 A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
 A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
 A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
 And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments
 For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —
 This *were* a medley ! we should have him back
 Who told the ' Winter's tale ' to do it for us.

No matter : we will say whatever comes,
And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space."

So I began,
And the rest follow'd : and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :
And here I give the story and the songs.

PART I.

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,

Of temper amorous, as
the first of May,

With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a
girl,

For on my cradle
shone the Northern star.



There lived an ancient legend in our
house.

Some sorcerer, whom
a far-off grandsire
burnt

Because he cast no
shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all
our blood should
know

The shadow from the
substance, and that
one

Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what :
On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd "catalepsy."
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;
My mother was as mild as any saint,
Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :
But my good father thought a king a king ;
He cared not for the affection of the house ;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgment.

Now it chanced that I had been,
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old ; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South,
And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress ; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their
queen.



"TORE THE KING'S LETTER."

But when the days drew nigh
that I should wed,
My father sent ambassadors
with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her :
these brought back
A present, a great labour of the
loom ;
And therewithal an answer
vague as wind :
Besides, they saw the king ; he
took the gifts ;
He said there was a compact ;
that was true :
But then she had a will ; was he
to blame ?
And maiden fancies ; loved to
live alone
Among her women ; certain,
would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,

Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down, and rent
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt ; and at last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke. " My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a king,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable :
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made." And Florian said :
" I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know,
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :
He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
The lady of three castles in that land :
Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean."
And Cyril whisper'd : " Take me with you too."
Then laughing, " what if these weird seizures come
Upon you in those lands, and no one near
To point you out the shadow from the truth !
Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;
I grate on rusty hinges here : " but " No ! "
Roar'd the rough king, " you shall not ; we ourself
Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
In iron gauntlets : break the council up."

But when the council broke, I rose and past

Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ;
Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;
Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :
What were those fancies? wherefore break her troth?
Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated
A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks



“HALF IN DREAD TO HEAR MY FATHER’S CLAMOUR AT OUR BACKS.”

Of the wild woods together; and a Voice
Went with it, “Follow, follow, thou shalt win.”

Then, ere the silver sickle of that month
Became her golden shield, I stole from court
With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,
Cat-footed thro' the town and half in dread
To hear my father’s clamour at our backs

With Ho ! from some bay-window shake the night ;
But all was quiet : from the bastion'd walls
Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
And flying reach'd the frontier : then we crost
To a livelier land ; and so by tilth and grange,
And vines, and blowing bosks of wilderness,
We gain'd the mother-city thick with towers,
And in the imperial palace found the king.

His name was Gama ; crack'd and small his voice,
But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
On glassy water drove his cheek in lines ;
A little dry old man, without a star,
Not like a king : three days he feasted us,
And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
And my betroth'd. " You do us, Prince," he said,
Airing a snowy hand and signet gem,
" All honour. We remember love ourselves
In our sweet youth : there did a compact pass
Long summers back, a kind of ceremony —
I think the year in which our olives fail'd.
I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart,
With my full heart : but there were widows here,
Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche ;
They fed her theories, in and out of place
Maintaining that with equal husbandry
The woman were an equal to the man.
They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;
Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all : they had but been, she thought,

As children ; they must lose the child, assume
The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful ; odes
About this losing of the child ; and rhymes
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;
And they that know such things— I sought but
peace ;

No critic I — would call them masterpieces :
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon,
A certain summer-palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more
We know not,—only this : they see no men,
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they loved her, looked upon her
As on a kind of paragon ; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loth to breed
Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;
And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing."

Thus the king ;

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode

Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties ;
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble ; then exclaim'd
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go : but as his brain
Began to mellow, " If the king," he said,
" Had given us letters, was he bound to speak ?
The king would bear him out ;" and at the last —
The summer of the vine in all his veins —
" No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had passed that way ; he heard her speak ;
She scared him ; life ! he never saw the like ;
She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave :
And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;
He always made a point to post with mares ;
His daughter and his housemaid were the boys :
The land, he understood, for miles about
Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows,
And all the dogs" —

But while he jested thus,
A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
Remembering how we three presented Maid
Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
In masque or pageant at my father's court.

We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;
He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
The midriff of despair with laughter, help
To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight when the college lights
Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley : then we passed an arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
From four wing'd horses dark against the stars ;
And some inscription ran along the front,
But deep in shadow : further on we gain'd
A little street half garden and half house ;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and
Earth
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;
A plump-arm'd Ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.

Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. "Lady Blanche" she said,
"And Lady Psyche." "Which was prettiest,
Best-natured?" "Lady Psyche." "Hers are we,"
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East :

"Three ladies of the Northern empire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils."

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes :
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears,

PART II.

At break of day the College Portress came ;
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons,
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited ; out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers,
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst,
And here and there on lattice edges lay
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past,
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were in her head,
And so much grace and power, breathing down

From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

“ We give you welcome : not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger : aftertime,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What ! are the ladies of your land so tall ?”
“ We of the court,” said Cyril. “ From the court,”
She answer'd, “ then ye know the Prince ?” and he:
“ The climax of his age ! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal :” she replied :
“ We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him : when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes justlier balanced, scale with scale.”

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting ; then an officer

Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these :
Not for three years to correspond with home ;
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;
Not for three years to speak with any men ;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards : and " Now," she cried,
" Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our
hall !

Our statues ! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O lift your natures up :
Embrace our aims : work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd :
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us : you may go :
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before ;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive."

She spoke, and bowing waved

Dismissal : back again we crost the court
To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,
There sat along the forms, like morning doves
That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
A patient range of pupils ; she herself
Erect behind a desk of satin-wood,
A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
And on the hither side, or so she look'd,
Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
In shining draperies, headed like a star,
Her maiden babe, a double April old,
Aglaïa slept. We sat : the Lady glanced :
Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
That whisper'd " Asses' ears," among the sedge,
" My sister." " Comely, too, by all that's fair,"
Said Cyril. " O hush, hush !" and she began.

" This world was once a fluid haze of light,
Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
The planets : then the monster, then the man ;
Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in skins,
Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate ;
As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
Among the lowest."

Thereupon she took
A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past ;
Glanced at the legendary Amazon
As emblematic of a nobler age ;
Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo ;
Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines



"ERECT BEHIND A DESK OF SATIN-WOOD."

Of empire, and the woman's state in each,
How far from just ; till warming with her theme
She fulminated out her scorn of laws Salique
And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry :
When some respect, however slight, was paid
To woman, superstition all awry :
However then commenced the dawn : a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded ; they must
build.

Here might they learn whatever men were taught :
Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :
Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;
For often fineness compensated size :
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ;
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field : some ages had been lost ;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer, and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so
With woman : and in arts of government

Elizabeth and others ; arts of war
The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace
Sappho and others vied with any man :
And, last not least, she who had left her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow
To use and power on this Oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future ; "everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the world,
Two in the liberal offices of life,
Two plummetts dropt for one to sound the abyss
Of science, and the secrets of the mind :
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :
And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the
world."

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the rest
Parted ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
Began to address us, and was moving on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried
"My brother !" "Well, my sister." "O," she
said,
"What do you here ? and in this dress ? and these ?
Why who are these ? a wolf within the fold !

A pack of wolves ! the Lord be gracious to me !
 A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all !"
 " No plot, no plot," he answer'd. " Wretched boy,
 How saw you not the inscription on the gate,
 LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH ?"
 " And if I had," he answer'd, " who could think
 The softer Adams of your Academe,
 O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such
 As chanted on the blanching bones of men ?"
 " But you will find it otherwise," she said.
 " You jest : ill jesting with edge-tools ! my vow
 Bids me to speak, and O that iron will,
 That axelike edge unturnable, our Head,
 The Princess." " Well then, Psyche, take my life,
 And nail me like a weasel on a grange
 For warning : bury me beside the gate,
 And cut this epitaph above my bones :
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain,
 All for the common good of womankind.*"
 " Let me die too," said Cyril, " having seen
 And heard the Lady Psyche."

I struck in :

" Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth ;
 Receive it ; and in me behold the Prince
 Your countryman, affianced years ago
 To the Lady Ida : here, for here she was,
 And thus (what other way was left) I came."
 " O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ; none ;
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was
 Disrooted what I am is grafted here.
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,

Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt
Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.”
“ Yet pause,” I said : “ for that inscription there,
I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit ; if more there be,
If more and acted on, what follows ? war ;
Your own work marr’d : for this your Academe,
Whichever side be victor, in the halloo
Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
With all fair theories only made to gild
A stormless summer.” “ Let the Princess judge
Of that” she said : “ farewell, Sir—and to you.
I shudder at the sequel, but I go.”

“ Are you that Lady Psyche,” I rejoin’d,
“ The fifth in line from that old Florian,
Yet hangs his portrait in my father’s hall
(The gaunt old Baron with his beetle brow
Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
As he bestrode my Grandsire, when he fell,
And all else fled ? we point to it, and we say,
The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,
But branches current yet in kindred veins.”
“ Are you that Psychè,” Florian added ; “ she
With whom I sang about the morning hills,
Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,
And snared the squirrel of the glen ? are you
That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
To smoothe my pillow, mix the foaming draught
Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
My sickness down to happy dreams ? are you

That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
You were that Psyche, but what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said, "for whom
I would be that for ever which I seem,
Woman, if I might sit beside your feet,
And glean your scatter'd sapience."

Then once more,
"Are you that Lady Psyche," I began,
"That on her bridal morn before she part
From all her old companions, when the king
Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties
Would still be dear beyond the southern hills;
That were there any of our people there
In want or peril, there was one to hear
And help them? look! for such are these and I."
"Are you that Psyche," Florian ask'd, "to whom,
In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
Came flying while you sat beside the well?
The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,
And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept.
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now?"
"You are that Psyche," Cyril said again,
"The mother of the sweetest little maid,
That ever crow'd for kisses."

"Out upon it!"

She answer'd, "peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal,

The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons : and I, shall I, on whom
The secular emancipation turns
Of half this world, be swerved from right to save
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash ! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet --
Hear my conditions : promise (otherwise
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon : it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn ;
They fled, who might have shamed us : promise,
all."

What could we else, we promised each ; and she,
Like some wild creature, newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian ; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said :
" I knew you at the first : tho' you have grown
You scarce have alter'd : I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. *I* give thee to death
My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well ?"

With that she kiss'd

His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall : and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
“ I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.”
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's color) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, “ Ah — Melissa — you !
You heard us ? ” and Melissa, “ O pardon me !
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish :
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,”
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
To give three gallant gentlemen to death.”
“ I trust you,” said the other, “ for we two
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine :
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose
My honour, these their lives.” “ Ah, fear me not”
Replied Melissa ; “ no — I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.”



"MELISSA, WITH HER HAND UPON THE LOCK."



"CYRIL TOOK THE CHILD."

"Be it so" the other,
 "that we still may
 lead

The new light up, and
 culminate in peace,
 For Solomon may come
 to Sheba yet."

Said Cyril, "Madam, he
 the wisest man

Feasted the woman wisest
 then, in halls

Of Lebanonian cedar: nor
 should you

(Tho' Madam *you* should
 answer, *we* would ask)

Less welcome find among
 us, if you came

Among us, debtors for
 our lives to you,

Myself for something
 more." He said not
 what,

But "Thanks," she an-
 swer'd, "Go: we have
 been too long

Together: keep your
 hoods about the face;

They do so that affect abstraction here.

Speak little; mix not with the rest; and hold
 Your promise: all, I trust, may yet be well."

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
 And held her round the knees against his waist,

And blew the swoll'n cheek of a trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ;
And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd
For half the day thro' stately theatres
Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration : follow'd then
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thundrous Epic lilted out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five-words-long
That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame, the rock,
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and known ;
Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke :
" Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we."
" They hunt old trails " said Cyril " very well ;
But when did woman ever yet invent ?"
" Ungracious !" answer'd Florian ; " have you learnt
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad ?"
" O trash " he said, " but with a kernel in it.

Should I not call her wise, who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash,
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts,
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stonacher; and now
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to my wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
And two dear things are one of double worth,
And much I might have said, but that my zone
Unmann'd me: then the Doctors! O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar,
To break my chain, to shake my mane: but thou,
Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet

Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;
Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out of time
Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell
For dinner, let us go !"



"IN THIS HAND HELD A VOLUME AS TO READ, AND SMOOTHED
A PETTED PEACOCK DOWN WITH THAT."

And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and still
By twos and threes, till all from end to end
With beauties every shade of brown and fair
In colours gayer than the morning mist,

The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
How might a man not wander from his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors : they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and fro :
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms



“ BUT WE THREE SAT MUFFLED LIKE THE FATES.”

Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one

In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that :
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some hid and
sought

In the orange thickets : others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing : what was learning unto them ?
They wished to marry ; they could rule a house ;
Men hated learned women : but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not : then day droopt ; the chapel bells
Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labours for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

PART III.

Morn in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts



“MORN IN THE WHITE WAKE OF THE MORNING STAR.”

In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and
watch'd,
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes
The circled Iris of a night of tears ;
“ And fly,” she cried, “ O fly, while yet you may !
My mother knows :” and when I ask’d her “ how,”
“ My fault” she wept “ my fault ! and yet not
mine ;

Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me.
My mother, ’tis her wont from night to night
To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
She says the Princess should have been the Head,
Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;
And so it was agreed when first they came ;
But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;
Hers more than half the students, all the love.
And so last night she fell to canvass you :
Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her.
‘ Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?
Girls ?— more like men !’ and at these words the
snake,

My secret, seem’d to stir within my breast ;
And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye
To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh’d :
‘ O marvellously modest maiden, you !
Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men
You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
For wholesale comment.’ Pardon, I am shamed
That I must needs repeat for my excuse
What looks so little graceful : ‘ men ’ (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)



"O MARVELLOUSLY MODEST MAIDEN, YOU!"

‘ And so they are, — very like men indeed —
And with that woman closeted for hours !’
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
‘ Why — these — *are* — men :’ I shudder’d : ‘ and
you know it.’
‘ O ask me nothing,’ I said : ‘ And she knows too,
And she conceals it.’ So my mother clutch’d
The truth at once, but with no word from me ;
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush’d ;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.”

“ What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ?”
Said Cyril : “ Pale one, blush again : than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven.”
He added, “ lest some classic Angel speak
In scorn of us, ‘ They mounted, Ganymedes,
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.’
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough :” and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. “ Tell us,” Florian ask’d,
“ How grew this feud between the right and left.”
“ O long ago,” she said, “ betwixt these two
Division smoulders hidden ; ’tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice : much I bear with her :
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool ;

And still she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up.
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go: I dare not tarry," and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled.

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,
"An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish:
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow."

"The crane," I said, "may chatter of the crane,
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,
But in her own grand way: being herself
Three times more noble than three score of men,
She sees herself in every woman else,
And so she wears her error like a crown
To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix

The nectar ; but — ah she — whene'er she moves
The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun."

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
And leaning there on those balusters, high
Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
That blown about the foliage underneath,
And sated with the innumerable rose,
Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
Cyril, and yawning "O hard task," he cried ;
"No fighting shadows here ! I forced a way
Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd.
Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
A league of street in summer solstice down,
Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found her there
At point to move, and settled in her eyes
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment : she demanded who we were,
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair,
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate,
And our three lives. True — we had limed our-
selves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.



"CAME A MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD."

But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. 'Not more than now,' she
said,
'So puddled as it is with favouritism.'
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :
Her answer was 'Leave me to deal with that.'
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak,
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced ; 'Decide not ere you pause.
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :
Wink at our advent : help my prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever.' Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day,
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I gain'd."

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
"That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land
Worth seeing ; and the river made a fall
Out yonder : " then she pointed on to where

A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near ;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house :
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe ;
Then from my breast the involuntary sigh
Broke, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she said :
"O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;
Unwillingly we spake." "No — not to her,"
I answer'd, "but to one of whom we spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you
say."

“Again?” she cried, “are you ambassadors
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license : speak, and let the topic die.”

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have
wish'd —

“Our king expects — was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but long'd
To follow : surely, if your Highness keep
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.”

“Poor boy,” she said, “can he not read — no
books?

Quoit, tennis, ball — no games? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise?
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have been :
We had our dreams ; perhaps he mixt with them :
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman's fall'n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.”

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
“And as to precontracts, we move, my friend,
At no man's beck, but know ourself and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon'd out

She kept her state, and left the
drunken king
To brawl at Shushan under-
neath the palms."

"Alas your Highness
breathes full East," I said,
"On that which leans to you.

I know the Prince,
I prize his truth : and then how
vast a work

To assail this gray præminence
of man !



"WOULD THEY GREW LIKE
FIELD-FLOWERS EVERYWHERE!"

You grant me license ; might I use it ? think ;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ;
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice
Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you,
With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
Meanwhile, that every woman counts her due,
Love, children, happiness?"

And she exclaim'd,
"Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild !
What ! tho' your Prince's love were like a God's,
Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?
You are bold indeed : we are not talk'd to thus :
Yet will we say for children, would they grew
Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well :

But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,
Howe'er you babble, great deeds cannot die ;
They with the sun and moon renew their light
For ever, blessing those that look on them.
Children — that men may pluck them from our
 hearts,

Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
O — children — there is nothing upon earth
More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;
Tho' she perhaps might reap the applause of Great,
Who learns the one *POU STO* whence after-hands
May move the world, tho' she herself effect
But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink
For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been,
In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living, each, a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone."

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts:

"No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you ;
We are used to that : for women, up till this
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,
Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker proof —
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,
To compass our dear sisters' liberties."

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods,
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
"As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be." "Dare we dream of that," I ask'd,
"Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?" "How," she cried, "you
love

The metaphysics ! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch : beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock ; our device ; wrought to the life ;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her :
For there are schools for all." "And yet" I said
'Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic." "Nay, we thought of that,"
She answer'd, "but it pleased us not : in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,

Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits : yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs :
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,
Which touches on the workman and his work.
Let there be light and there was light : 'tis so :
For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light : but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and
make
One act a phantom of succession : thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time ;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day."

She spake

With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. "O how sweet" I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask)
"To linger here with one that loved us." "Yea,"
She answer'd, "or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy ; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,



"I WITH MINE AFFIANCED."

Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun :” then, turning to her maids,
“ Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;
Lay out the viands.” At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
With fair Corinna’s triumph ; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,
The woman-conquerer ; woman-conquer’d there
The bearded Victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn’d at his side : but we
Set forth to climb ; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set
In the dark crag : and then we turn’d, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying

O hark, O hear ! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.



“THERE SINKS THE NEBULOUS STAR WE CALL THE SUN.”

PART IV. +

“There sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
 If that hypothesis of theirs be sound”
 Said Ida; “let us down and rest;” and we
 Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
 By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,
 Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where below
 No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
 Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean’d on me,
 Descending; once or twice she lent her hand,
 And blissful palpitations in the blood,
 Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
 Beneath the satin dome and enter’d in,
 There leaning deep in broider’d down we sank
 Our elbows: on a tripod in the midst
 A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow’d
 Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, "Let some
onesing to us; lightlier
move

The minutes fledged with
music:" and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote
her harp, and sang.

"Tears, idle tears, I
know not what they
mean,

Tears from the depth of
some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and
gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy
Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days
that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam
glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up
from the underworld,
Sad as the last which red-
dens over one

That sinks with all we love "AND A MAID, OF THOSE BESIDE HER,
below the verge ; SMOTE HER HARP, AND SANG."

So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

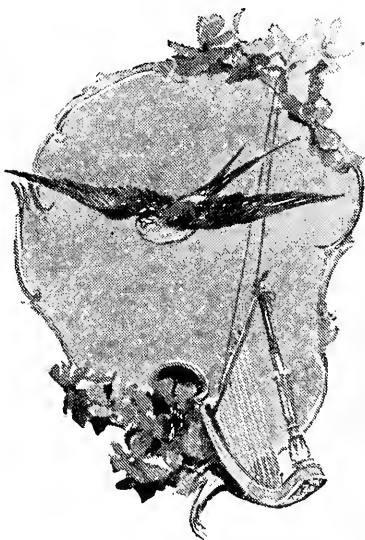


“ Dear as remember’d kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign’d
On lips that are for others ; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.”

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain
Answer’d the Princess, “ If indeed there haunt
About the moulder’d lodges of the Past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatch’d
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost,
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time .
Toward that great year of equal mights and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden : let the past be past ; let be
Their cancell’d Babels : tho’ the rough kex break
The starr’d mosaic, and the beard-blown goat
Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow : ” then to me ;
“ Know you no song of your own land,” she said,

“Not such as moans about
the retrospect,
But deals with the other dis-
tance and the hues
Of promise ; not a death’s-
head at the wine.”

Then I remember’d one
myself had made,
What time I watch’d the
swallow winging south
From mine own land, part
made long since, and part
Now while I sang, and
maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble,
did I sing.



“O SWALLOW. SWALLOW, FLYING,
FLYING SOUTH.”

“O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South,
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

“O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North.

“O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

“O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

“ Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

“ O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown :
Say to her I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

“ O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

“ O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.”

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time,
Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice
Rang false : but smiling “ Not for thee,” she said,
“ O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid,
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men,
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up.
And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
Poor soul ! I had a maid of honour once ;
She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,

A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
Used to great ends: ourself have often tried
Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
The passion of the prophetess; for song
Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
Of spirit than to junketing and love.
Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this
Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough!
But now to leaven play with profit, you,
Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
That gives the manners of your countrywomen?"

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with
eyes
Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had
wrought,
Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences
Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
"Forbear," the Princess cried; "Forbear, Sir" I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love.



"BEGAN TO TROLL A
CARELESS, CARELESS
TAVERN-CATCH."

I smote him on the breast ; he started
up ;

There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd ;
Melissa clamour'd "Flee the death ;"

"To horse"

Said Ida ; "home ! to horse !" and
fled, as flies

A troop of snowy doves athwart the
dusk,

When some one batters at the dove-
cote-doors,

Disorderly the women. Alone I stood

With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,

In the pavilion : there like parting hopes

I heard them passing from me : hoof by hoof,

And every hoof a knell to my desires,

Clang'd on the bridge ; and then another shriek,

"The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head !"

For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd

In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom :

There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch

Rapt in the horrible fall : a glance I gave,

No more ; but women-vested as I was

Plunged ; and the flood drew ; yet I caught her ;
then

Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left

The weight of all the hopes of half the world,

Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree

Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd

To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave

Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught,

And grasping down the bows I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms ; they cried "she
lives :"



"FOUND AT LENGTH THE GARDEN PORTALS."

They bore her back into the tent : but I,
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot

(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
 Across the woods, and less from Indian craft
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
 The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain,
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to
 hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt "if this were she,"
 But it was Florian. "Hist O Hist," he said,
 "They seek us : out so late is out of rules.
 Moreover 'seize the strangers' is the cry.
 How came you here?" I told him : "I" said he,
 "Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath

The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each
Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all,
Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
She, question'd if she knew us men, at first
Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :
And then, demanded if her mother knew,
Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied :
From whence the Royal mind, familiar with her,
Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd
For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;
She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ;
And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?
And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled :
What, if together ? that were not so well.
Would rather we had never come ! I dread
His wildness, and the chances of the dark."

"And yet," I said, "you wrong him more than I
That struck him : this is proper to the clown,
Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er
He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
These flashes on the surface are not he.
He has a solid base of temperament :
But as the waterlily starts and slides
Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he."



"THEY HALED US TO THE PRINCESS
WHERE SHE SAT HIGH IN THE HALL."

Scarce had I ceased
when from a tamarisk
near
Two Proctors leapt upon
us, crying, "Names :"
He, standing still, was
clutch'd, but I began
To thrid the musky-cir-
cled mazes, wind
And double in and out the
boles, and race
By all the fountains : fleet
I was of foot :
Before me shower'd the
rose in flakes ; behind
I heard the puff'd pur-
suer ; at mine ear
Bubbled the nightingale
and heeded not,
And secret laughter
tickled all my soul.
At last I hook'd my ankle
in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a
Mnemosyne,
And falling on my face was
caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
High in the hall : above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow

Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head,
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men,
Huge women blowzed with health, and wind, and
rain,
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne : and therebeside,
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs,
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

“It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :
I led you then to all the Castalies ;
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother : those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend : you began to change —
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool ;
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.

Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back,
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head,
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve ; and thus a noble scheme
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown ;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :
We took this palace ; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine.
What student came but that you planed her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean ;
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known :
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* en-
dured,
Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine,
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd
To meet a cold ' We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche : ' you had gone to her,
She told perforce ; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat

Were all miscounted as malignant haste
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use required she should be known ;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well,
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I :
Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies ;
And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
I, that have lent my life to build up yours,
I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast :
Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan,
Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
For every gust of chance, and men will say
We did not know the real light, but chased
The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread."

She ceased : the Princess answer'd coldly, " Good :
Your oath is broken : we dismiss you : go.
For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
Our mind is changed : we take it to ourself."

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,

And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile.
“The plan was mine. I built the nest” she said
“To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!” and stoop’d to up-
drag

Melissa : she, half on her mother propt,
Half-drooping from her, turn’d her face, and cast
A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
Which melted Florian’s fancy as she hung,
A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
Appealing to the bolts of Heaven ; and while
We gazed upon her came a little stir
About the doors, and on a sudden rush’d
Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,
A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk’d her face, and wing’d
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal’d dispatches which the Head
Took half-amazed, and in her lion’s mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the Heavens ;
For anger most it seem’d, while now her breast
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;
The plaintive cry jarr’d on her ire ; she crush’d
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn

As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
"Read," and I read — two letters — one her sire's.



"AND WING'D HER TRANSIT TO THE THRONE."

"Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your
way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt,

We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,
You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you,
And here he keeps me hostage for his son."

The second was my father's running thus :
" You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :
Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :
Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear
You hold the woman is the better man ;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down ;
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole."

So far I read :

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

" O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,
Tho' man, yet human, whatso'er your wrongs,
From the flaxen curl to the gray lock a life
Less mine than yours ; my nurse would tell me of
you ;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,

Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd to me
From all high places, lived in all fair lights,
Came in long breezes rapt from inmost south
And blown to inmost north ; at eve and dawn
With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;
The leader wildswan in among the stars
Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glowworm
light
The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned



THE LEADER WILDSWAN IN AMONG THE STARS."

Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
Those winters of abeyance all worn out,
A man I came to see you : but, indeed,
Not in this frequency can I lend full tongue,
O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
On you, their centre : let me say but this,
That many a famous man and woman, town
And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
The dwarfs of presage : tho' when known, there
grew
Another kind of beauty in detail

Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found
My boyish dream involved and dazzled down
And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
Within me, that except you slay me here,
According to your bitter statute-book,
I cannot cease to follow you, as they say
The seal does music ; who desire you more
Than growing boys their manhood ; dying lips,
With many thousand matters left to do,
The breath of life ; O more than poor men wealth,
Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine —
but half
Without you ; with you, whole ; and of those
halves
You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar
Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest till he die :
Yet that I came not all unauthorized
Behold your father's letter."

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce
Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
As waits a river level with the dam
Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :
And so she would have spoken, but there rose
A hubbub in the court of half the maids
Gather'd together : from the illumined hall
Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press

Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some
pale,
All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,
Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded : high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and
call'd
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

“What fear ye, brawlers? am not I your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : / dare
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear?
Peace ! there are those to avenge us and they come :
If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die : yet I blame you not so much for fear ;

Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you : but for those
That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know
Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn
We hold a great convention : then shall they
That love their voices more than duty, learn
With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools abroad."

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said :

"You have done well and like a gentleman,
And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :
And you look well too in your woman's dress :
Well have you done and like a gentleman.
You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks :
Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you both? —
Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
You would-be quenchers of the light to be,



"THEY PUSH'D US, DOWN THE STEPS, AND THRO' THE COURT."

Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
O would I had his sceptre for one hour !
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee ! *I* bound by precontract
Your bride, your bondslave ! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your
crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :
I trample on your offers and on you :
Begone : we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates."

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause,
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands
The weight of destiny : so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the
court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts ;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings
Were shadows ; and the long fantastic night

With all its doings had and had not been,
And all things were and were not.

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy ;
Not long ; I shook it off ; for spite of doubts
And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
To whom the touch of all mischance but came
As night to him that sitting on a hill
Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
That beat to battle where he stands ;
Thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands :
A moment, while the trumpets blow,
He sees his brood about thy knee ;
The next, like fire he meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd,
She struck such warbling fury thro' the words ;
And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
Like one that wishes at a dance to change
The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
Or some grand fight to kill and make an end :
And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
“ Sir Ralph has got your colours : if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me ? ”
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. “ Fight ” she said,
“ And make us all we would be, great and good.”
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall,
Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.

PART V.

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
We stumbled on a stationary voice,
And "Stand, who goes?" "Two from the palace" I.



"The second two : they wait," he said, "pass on ;
His Highness wakes :"
 arms,
By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led

Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light
Dazed me half-blind : I stood and seem'd to hear
As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
A lisp of the innumerable leaf and dies,
Each hissing in his neighbor's ear, and then
A strangled titter, out of which there brake
On all sides, clamoring etiquette to death,
Unmeasured mirth ; while now the two old kings
Began to wag their baldness up and down,
The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering
teeth,
The huge bush-bearded Barons heaved and blew,
And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded Squire.

At length my Sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
Panted from weary sides "King, you are free !
We did but keep you surety for our son,
If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin, thou,
That tends her bristled grunners in the sludge :"
For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.
Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
A whisper'd jest to some one near him, "Look,
He has been among his shadows." "Satan take
The old women and their shadows ! (thus the King
Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
Go : Cyril told us all."

As boys that slink
From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
Away we stole, and transient in a trice
From what was left of faded woman-slough
To sheathing splendours and the golden scale
Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us.
A little shy at first, but by and by
We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon
Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
Had come on Psyche weeping : " then we fell
Into your father's hand, and there she lies.
But will not speak, nor stir."

He show'd a tent
A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and there
Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal,
All her fair length upon the ground she lay :
And at her head a follower of the camp,
A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and " Come " he whisper'd to her,
" Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not thus.
What have you done but right ? you could not slay
Me, nor your prince : look up : be comforted :
Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,

When fall'n in darker ways." And likewise I :
" Be comforted : have I not lost her too,
In whose least act abides the nameless charm
That none has else for me ?" She heard, she moved,
She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she sat,
And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth
As those that mourn half shrouded over death



" ALL HER FAIR LENGTH UPON THE GROUND SHE LAY :"

In deathless marble. " Her," she said, " my friend —
Parted from her — betray'd her cause and mine —
Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye not your faith ?
O base and bad ! what comfort ? none for me !"
To whom remorseful Cyril, " Yet I pray
Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your child !"
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

“ Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more !
For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers— for every little fault,
The child is hers ; and they will beat my girl
Remembering her mother : O my flower !
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there,
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all:
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like the wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaia, my one child :
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her :
Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me
Who gave me back my child ?” “ Be comforted,”
said Cyril, “ you shall have it :” but again
She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so
Like tender things that being caught feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts
With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.
We left her by the woman, and without

Found the gray kings at parle : and "Look you" cried
My father "that our compact be fulfill'd :
You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you and
man :

She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him :
But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;
She yields, or war."

Then Gama turn'd to me :
"We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
With our strange girl : and yet they say that still
You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :
How say you, war or not?"

"Not war, if possible,
O king," I said, "lest from the abuse of war,
The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,
The smouldering homestead, and the household
flower

Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —
A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn
At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
By gentleness than war. I want her love.
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ; — or brought her chain'd, a
slave,

The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance



"Some wild shore where
rings of wreck"

Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old God of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out."

And roughly spake
My father, "Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !
Man is the hunter ; woman is his game :
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;
They love us for it, and we ride them down.
Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,
Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in
Among the women, snares them by the score
Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, though dash'd with death
He reddens what he kisses : thus I won
Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
Worth winning ; but this firebrand — gentleness
To such as her ! if Cyril spake her true,
To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
To trip a tiger with a gossamer,
Were wisdom to it."

"Yea but Sire," I cried,
"Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No :
What dares not Ida do that she should prize

The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death,
No, not the soldier's : yet I hold her, king,
True woman : but you clash them all in one,
That have as many differences as we.
The violet varies from the lily as far
As oak from elm : one loves the soldier, one
The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
And some unworthily ; their sinless faith,
A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
Glorifying clown and satyr ; whence they need
More breadth of culture : is not Ida right?
They worth it? truer to the law within?
Severer in the logic of a life?
Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
Of earth and Heaven? and she of whom you speak,
My mother, looks as whole as some serene
Creation minted in the golden moods
Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,
But pure as lines of green that streak the white
Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,
Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,
But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,
Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,
As truthful, much that Ida claims as right
Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly theirs
As dues of Nature. To our point : not war :
Lest I lose all."

"Nay, nay, you spake but sense"

Said Gama. We remember love ourself
In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then
This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.
You talk almost like Ida : *she* can talk ;
And there is something in it as you say :
But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it.—
He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,
I would he had our daughter : for the rest,
Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,
Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —
We would do much to gratify your Prince —
We pardon it ; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land,
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream :
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it,
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida : something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will,
Follow us : who knows ? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition."

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my Sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go.

Then rode we with the old king across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring

In every bole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
In the old king's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads : but other thoughts than Peace
Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares,
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers



“ OF BIRDS THAT PIPED THEIR VALENTINES.”

With clamour : for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king ; they made a halt ;
The horses yell'd ; they clash'd their arms ; the drum
Beat ; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife ;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner : anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out ; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men ; the midmost and the highest
Was Arac : all about his motion clung

The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them
glance

Like those three stars of the airy giant's zone,
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark ;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wildbeast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike : then took the king
His three broad sons ; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all :
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words.

“Our land invaded, 'sdeath ! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war :
And 'sdeath ! myself, what care I, war or no ?
But then this question of your troth remains :
And there's a downright honest meaning in her ;
She flies too high, she flies too high ! and yet
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme ;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
What know I of these things ? but, life and soul !
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs ;
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath ! what of that ?

I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not : this is all,
I stand upon her side : she made me swear it —
'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by St. something — I forget her name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men ;
She was a princess too ; and so I swore.
Come, this is all : she will not : waive your claim :
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath ! against my father's will."

I lagg'd in answer loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat " Like to like !
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart."
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !
For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
" Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three."

Then spake the third " But three to three ? no more ?
No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?
More, more, for honour : every captain waits
Hungry for honour, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that each

May breathe himself, and quick ! by overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled die."

"Yea," answer'd I, "for this wild wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
Foam of men's deeds — this honour, if ye will.
It needs must be for honour if at all :
Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,
And if we win, we fail : she would not keep
Her compact." "'Sdeath ! but we will send to her,"
Said Arac, "worthy reasons why she should
Bide by this issue : let our missive thro',
And you shall have her answer by the word."

"Boys !" shriek'd the old king, but vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool ; for none
Regarded ; neither seem'd there more to say :
Back rode we to my father's camp and found,
He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells
With her own people's life : three times he went :
The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd :
He batter'd at the doors ; none came : the next,
An awful voice within had warn'd him thence :
The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair,
And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild : not less one glance he caught
Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
Tho' compassed by two armies and the noise



"HE THRICE HAD SENT A HERALD TO THE GATES."

Of arms ; and standing like a stately Pine
Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and right and left
Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll
The torrents, dash'd to the vale : and yet her will
Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I was pledged
To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
His iron palms together with a cry ;
Himself would tilt it out among the lads :
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And swore to combat for my claim till death.

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with Tomyris
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came ;
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

“ O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard

Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those, —
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling
Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
Made for all noble motion : and I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker times
With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'd all :
Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
No woman named : therefore I set my face
Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
Far off from men I built a fold for them :
I stored it full of rich memorial :
I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey
And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys
Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace,
Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
Of insolence and love, some pretext held
Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings ! — for their
sport ! —

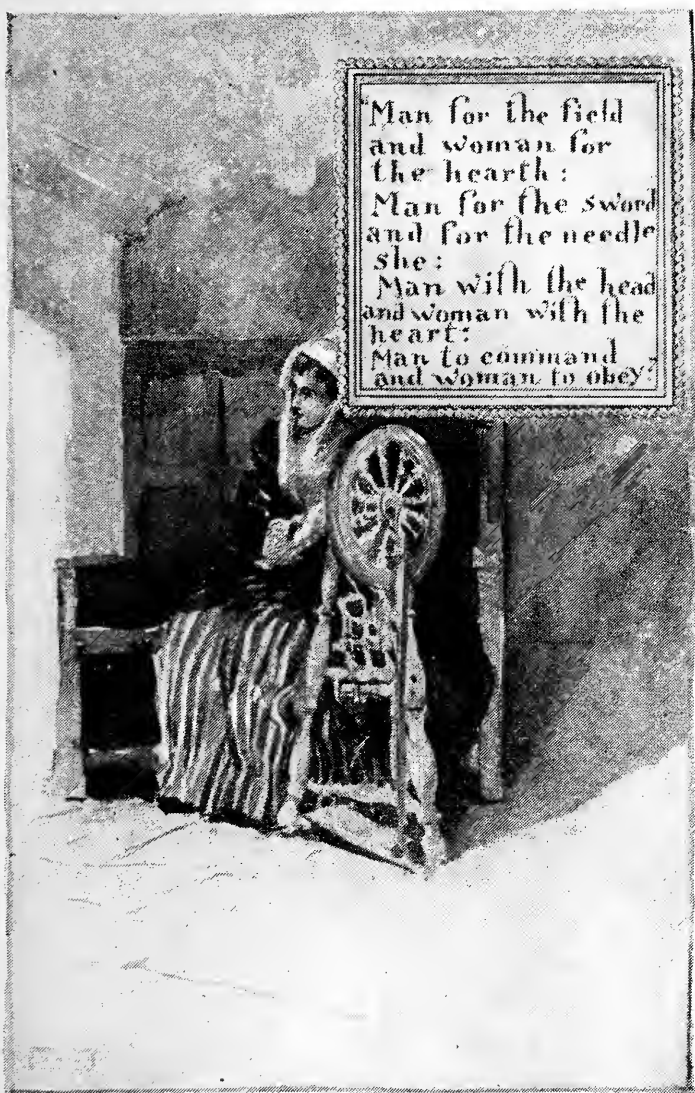
I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ?
Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touch'd
In honour — what, I would not aught of false —
Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know
Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide
What end soever : fail you will not. Still

Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;
His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,
Fight and fight well ; strike and strike home. O
dear

Brothers, the woman's Angel guards you, you
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know her-
self ;

And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins,
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn."

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.
"See that there be no traitors in your camp :
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague of men !
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child
Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :
She shall not have it back : the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning : there the tender orphan hands



Man for the field
and woman for
the hearth :
Man for the sword
and for the needle
she :
Man with the head
and woman with the
heart :
Man to command
and woman to obey :

"MAN FOR THE FIELD AND WOMAN FOR THE HEARTH."

Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell."

I ceased ; he said, "Stubborn, but she may sit
Upon a king's right hand in thunder-storms,
And breed up warriors ! See now, tho' yourself
Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
That swallow common sense, the spindling king,
This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
And topples down the scales ; but this is fixt
As are the roots of earth and base of all ;
Man for the field and woman for the hearth :
Man for the sword and for the needle she :
Man with the head and woman with the heart :
Man to command and woman to obey ;
All else confusion. Look you ! the gray mare
Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
From tile to scullery, and her small Goodman
Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell
Mixed with his hearth : but you — she's yet a colt —
Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly
curb'd
She might not rank with those detestable
That let the bantling scald at home, and brawl
Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance :
I like her none the less for rating at her !
Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
The bearing and the training of a child

Is woman's wisdom."

Thus the hard old king :

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause "take not his life :"
I mused on that wild morning in the woods,
And on the "Follow, follow, thou shalt win :"
I thought on all the wrathful king had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end :
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should
fall ;

And like a flash the weird affection came :
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows ;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream :
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points,
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.
Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept their seats :

Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew :
Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere
He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing lists,
And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and
shield —

Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
With hammers ; till I thought, can this be he
From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so,
The mother makes us most — and in my dream
I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
A single band of gold about her hair,
Like a Saint's glory up in heaven : but she
No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight,
Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave
Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream
All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
His visage all agrin as at a wake,
Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman,
came

As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes

On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and
splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsmen cry ; for everything
Gave way before him : only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye,
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :
And Cyril, seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at arms ;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote
And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat : a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.

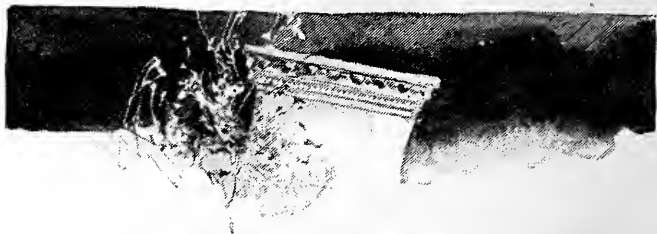


Home they brought her warrior dead :
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
All her maidens, watching, said,
"She must weep or she will die."

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved,
Truest friend and noblest foe ;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face ;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
"Sweet my child, I live for thee."



PART VI.

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard:
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm: there on the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

"Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n: the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

“ Our enemies have fall’n, have fall’n : they came ;
The leaves were wet with women’s tears : they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand :
They mark’d it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fall’n themselves.

“ Our enemies have fall’n, have fall’n : they came,
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor,
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

“ Our enemies have fall’n, have fall’n : they struck ;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter’d to the shoulder blade.

“ Our enemies have fall’n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and roll’d
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

“ And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion’d our cause and won it with a day
Blanch’d in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round

Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses ; but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality."

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the Park.
Some cowl'd, and some bare headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went
The enamour'd air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade : but Blanche
At distance follow'd : so they came : anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously ; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork to the Sun,
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay ; there stay'd ;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said "You shall not lie in the tents but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and
served
With female hands and hospitality."

Then, whither moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent ; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale,
Cold ev'n to her, she sigh'd ; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
As grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd a twitch of pain,
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said :
" He saved my life : my brother slew him for it."
No more : at which the king in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress
And held them up : she saw them, and a day
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :
And then once more she look'd at my pale face :
Till understanding all the foolish work
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
She bow'd, she set the child on the earth ; she
laid

A feeling finger on my brows, and presently
" O Sire," she said, " he lives : he is not dead :
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace : we will tend on him
Like one of these ; if so, by any means,
To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make
Our progress falter to the woman's goal."

"O SIRE," SHE SAID, "HE LIVES: HE IS NOT DEAD."



She said : but at the happy word " he lives"
My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt
Their dark and gray, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fall'n meteor on the grass,
Uncared for, spied its mother and began
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamouring out " Mine — mine —
not yours,
It is not yours, but mine : give me the child"
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye,
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,
Or self involved ; but when she learnt his face,



"DOWN SHE LOOK'D AT THE ARM'D MAN SIDEWAYS."

Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

“O fair and strong and terrible ! Lioness
That with your long locks play the Lion's mane !
But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks
We vanquish'd, you the Victor of your will.
What would you more ? give her the child ! remain
Orb'd in your isolation : he is dead,
Or all as dead : henceforth we let you be :
Win you the hearts of women ; and beware
Lest, where you seek the common love of these,
The common hate with the revolving wheel
Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis
Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire
And tread you out forever : but howsoe'er
Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms
To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
Give her the child ! O if, I say, you keep
One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
The breast that fed or arm that dandled you,
Or own one port of sense not flint to prayer,
Give her the child ! or if you scorn to lay it,
Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill,
Give *me* it : *I* will give it her.”

He said :

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd



"WE TWO MUST PART."

Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child ; she took it : " Pretty bud !
Lily of the vale ! half-open'd bell of the woods !
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ;
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part : and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast
In the dead prime : but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me !
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom" — here she kiss'd it : then —
" All good go with thee ! take it, Sir," and so
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks ;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it ; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

" We two were friends : I go to mine own land
For ever : find some other : as for me
I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to
me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven."

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac. "Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!
I am your warrior: I and mine have fought
Your battle: kiss her; take her hand, she weeps:
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice o'er than see it."

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground,
And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama said:

"I've heard that there is iron in the blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not one?
Whence drew you this steel temper? not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —
'Our Ida has a heart' — just ere she died —
'But see that some one with authority
Be near her still' and I — I sought for one —
All people said she had authority —
The Lady Blanche: much profit! not one word;
No! tho' your father sues: see how you stand
Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good knights maim'd,
I trust that there is no one hurt to death,
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone,
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me

Now had you got a friend of your own age,
 Now could you share your thought; now should
 men see

Two women faster welded in one love

Than pairs of wedlock;
 she you walk'd with,
 she

You talk'd with, whole
 nights long, up in the
 tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid
 and azimuth,
 And right ascension,
 Heaven knows what;
 and now

A word, but one, one
 little kindly word,

Not one to spare her: out
 upon you, flint!

You love nor her, nor
 me, nor any; nay,

You shame your mother's
 judgment too. Not
 one?

You will not? well—no
 heart have you, or
 such

As fancies like the ver-
 min in a nut

Have fretted all to dust
 and bitterness."

So said the small king moved beyond his wont.



"SHE YOU TALK'D WITH, WHOLE
 NIGHTS LONG, UP IN THE TOWER."

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long.
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept :
Her head a little bent ; and on her mouth
A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
In a still water : then brake out my sire,
Lifting his grim head from my wounds. " O you,
Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
And were half fool'd to let you tend our son,
Because he might have wish'd it — but we see
The accomplice of your madness unforgiven,
And think that you might mix his draught with
death,
When your skies change again : the rougher hand
Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince."

He rose, and while each ear was prick'd to attend
A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd her broke
A genial warmth and light once more, and shone
Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.

"Come hither.

O Psyche," she cried out, "embrace me, come,
Quick while I melt ; make reconciliation sure
With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :
Come to the hollow heart they slander so !
Kiss and be friends, like children being chid !
I seem no more : *I* want forgiveness too :
I should have had to do with none but maids,
That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
Dear traitor, too much loved, why ? — why ? — Yet
see,
Before these kings we embrace you yet once more

With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,
Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him,
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it ;
Taunt me no more : yourself and yours shall have
Free adit ; we will scatter all our maids -
Till happier times each to her proper hearth :
What use to keep them here — now ? grant my
prayer.

Help, father, brother, help ; speak to the king :
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind,
Poor weakling ev'n as they are."

Passionate tears
Follow'd : the king replied not : Cyril said :
"Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him
Of your great head — for he is wounded too —
That you may tend upon him with the prince."
"Ay so," said Ida with a bitter smile,
"Our laws are broken ; let him enter too."
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. "Ay so," she said,
"I stagger in the stream : I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour :
We break our laws with ease, but let it be."
"Ay so ?" said Blanche : "Amazed am I to hear
Your Highness: but your Highness breaks with ease

The law your Highness did not make : 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out ; but these men came to woo
Your Highness — verily I think to win."

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye :
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

" Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too,
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult but are gone."

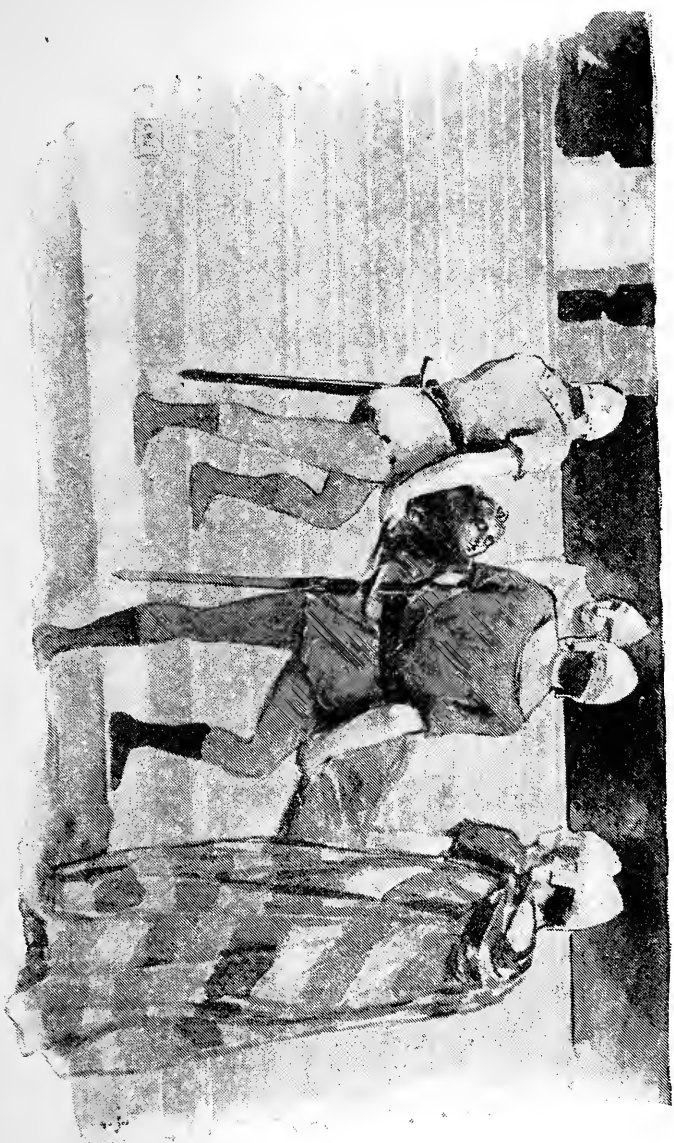
She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince
Her brother came ; the king her father charm'd
Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then as they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd
The virgin marble under iron heels :
And on they moved and gain'd the hall, and there
Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,

To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers : at the further end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed
They glared upon the women, and aghast
The women stared at these, all silent, save
When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
A flying splendour out of brass and steel
That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
And now and then an echo started up,
And shudder fled from room to room, and died
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice

Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance :
And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due
To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;
And others otherwhere they laid ; and all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times ; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.



"THEY BORE UP THE BROAD STAIRS."

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;
The cloud may stoop from Heaven and take the
shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd ;
I strove against the stream and all in vain :
Let the great river take me to the main :
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

PART VII.

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;
At first with all confusion : by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws :
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere
Low voices with a ministering hand
Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they
 talk'd,
They sang, they read : till she not fair began
To gather light, and she that was, became
Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro
With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,
Like creatures native unto gracious act,
And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame
Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke : but oft
Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of men
Darkening her female field : void was her use,
And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze
O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
Blot out the slope of sea from verge to shore,
And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,



"OFT CLOMB TO THE ROOFS, AND GAZED
ALONE FOR HOURS."

And quenching
lake by lake and
tarn by tarn

Expunge the world:
so fared she gaz-
ing there;

So blacken'd all her
world in secret,
blank

And waste it seem'd
and vain; till
down she came,
And found fair
peace once more
among the sick.

And twilight
dawn'd; and morn
by morn the lark
Shot up and shrill'd
in flickering
gyres, but I

Lay silent in the
muffled cage of
life:

And twilight gloom'd; and broader-grown the
bowers

Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,
Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand

That nursed me,
more than infants
in their sleep.

But Psyche tend-
ed Florian : with
her oft,

Melissa came ; for
Blanche had
gone, but left

Her child among
us, willing she
should keep

Court-favour: here
and there the
small bright head,

A light of healing,
glanced about
the couch,

Or thro' the parted
silks the tender
face

Peep'd, shining in
upon the wound-
ed man

With blush and
smile, a medicine
in themselves

To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts



"THRO' THE PARTED SILKS."

So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ;
Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more ; till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face
A little flush'd, and she past on ; but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own now reconciled ; nor yet
Did those twin-brothers, risen again and whole ;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
" You are not Ida ; " clasp it once again,

And call her *Ida*, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold which seem'd a truth :
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die :
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,
And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
On flying Time from all their silver tongues —
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream,
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness : it was evening : silent light
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs ; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side

Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,
A train of dames : by axe and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins,
The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused
Hortensia pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :
They did but look like hollow shows ; nor more
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd : I moved : I sigh'd : a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had,
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixed my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly :

“ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.”

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd ; she
paused ;

She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ;
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;
And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;



“ MY SPIRIT CLOSED WITH IDA'S AT THE LIPS.”

Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;
And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end ; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided forth,
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land :
There to herself, all in low tones, she read.

“ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :
The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.”

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small
Sweet Idyl, and once more, as low, she read :

“ Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain
height :
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,

To sit a star upon the sparkling spire ;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley ; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,
That like a broken purpose waste in air :
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees."

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening ; then look'd. Pale was the perfect face ;
The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and meek
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said



"I THY SHEPHERD PIPE."

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility; had fail'd in all;
That all her labour was but as a block
Left in the quarry; but she still were loth,
She still were loth to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than
power

In knowledge: something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week:
Much had she learned in little time. In part
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts: yet was she but a girl—
“Ah fool, and made myself a Queen of farce!
When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.”

Her voice

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird,
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

“Blame not thyself too much,” I said, “nor
blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws;



"SHE MOVED, AND AT HER
FEET THE VOLUME FELL."

These were the rough ways
of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a help-
er, me that know
The woman's cause is man's :
they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike,
bond or free :
For she that out of Lethe
scales with man
The shining steps of Nature,
shares with man
His nights, his days, moves
with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young
planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natur-
ed, miserable,
How shall men grow? but
work no more alone !
Our place is much : as far as
in us lies
We two will serve them both
in aiding her —

Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down —
Will leave her space to burgeon out of all
Within her — let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelop't man,
But diverse : could we make her as the man,

Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;
The man be more of woman, she of man ;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;
She mental breath, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words ;
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities,
But like each other ev'n as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be ! ”

Sighing she spoke, “ I fear
They will not.”

“ Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
Of equal ; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
Life.”

And again sighing she spoke : " A dream
That once was mine ! what woman taught you
this ? "

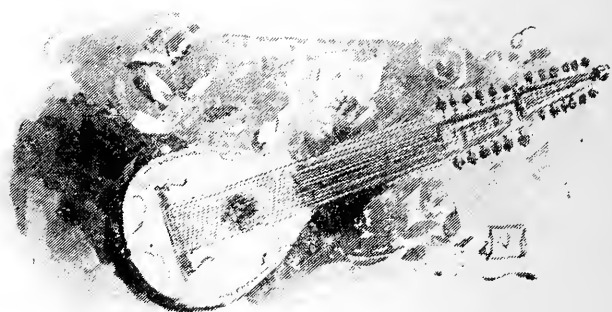
" Alone," I said, " from earlier than I know,
Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives
A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
Or keeps his wing'd affections clipped with crime :
Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother ! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

" But I,"

Said Ida, tremulously, " so all unlike —
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :
This mother is your model. I have heard
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;
You cannot love me."

“Nay but thee” I said
“From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw
The woman thro’ the crust of iron moods
That mask’d thee from men’s reverence up, and
forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now,
Giv’n back to life, to life indeed, thro’ thee,
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill’d it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine,
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this
Is morn to more, and all the rich to-come
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me,
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end,
And so thro’ those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee : come,
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.”



CONCLUSION.

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :
The words are mostly mine ; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
"I wish she had not yielded !" then to me,
"What, if you drest it up poetically !"
So pray'd the men, the women : I gave assent :
Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf? What style could suit?
The men required that I should give throughout
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :
The women — and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat,
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime ?
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close ?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.
Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
And yet to give the story as it rose,

I moved as in a strange diagonal,
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
" You — tell us what we are " who might have told
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books,
But that there rose a shout : the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.



"THE GATES WERE CLOSED AT SUNSET."

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace ;
Gray halls alone among their massive groves ;
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ;
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

“ Look there, a garden ! ” said my college friend,
The Tory member's elder son, “ and there !
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself, -
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made,
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight,
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own ;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
No graver than a schoolboys' barring out ;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream

As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas!
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.”

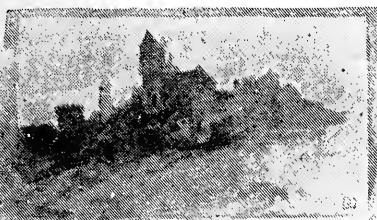
“Have patience,” I replied, “ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth :
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.”

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails,
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed Baronet he,
A great broad shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest — now address'd to speech —
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year
To follow: a shout arose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang

Beyond the bourn of sunset ; O, a shout
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier of king ! Why should not these great Sirs
Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe ? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away.

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd ; we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man : the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd,
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we
went.





*Revered, beloved — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song;
For tho' the faults were as thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule as long,*

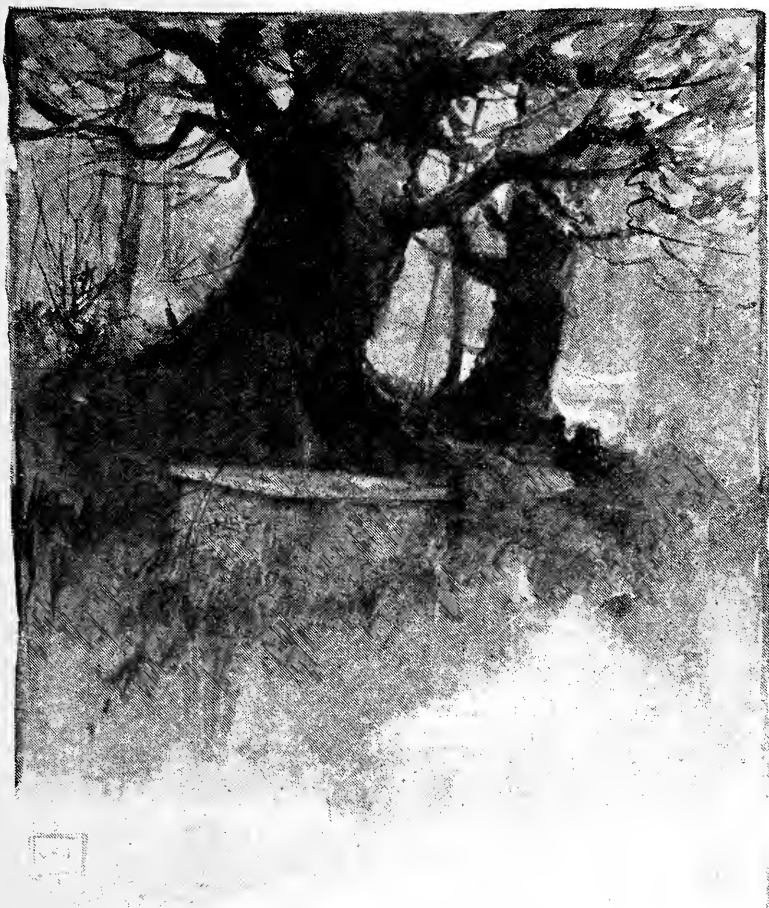
*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
“ She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*“ Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*“ And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*“ By shaping some august decree,
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.”*

March, 1851.



"THE SOLEMN OAK-TREE SIGHETH."

JUVENILIA.

CLARIBEL.

A MELODY.

I.

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall :
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II.

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone :
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone ;
At midnight the moon cometh
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,

The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throistle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE.

WHEN will the stream be weary of flowing
Under my eye ?

When will the wind be weary of blowing
Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be weary of fleeting ?

When will the heart be weary of beating ?
And nature die ?

Never, oh ! never, nothing will die ;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'Tis the world's winter ;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago ;

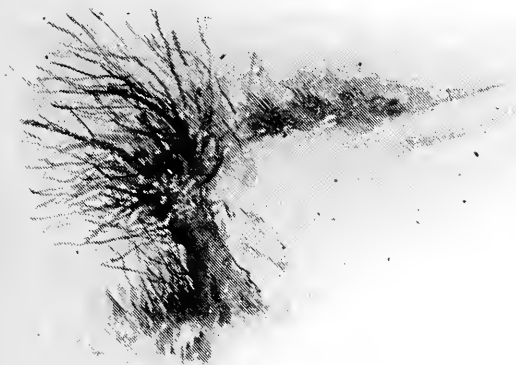
Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,
Thro' and thro',
Here and there,
Till the air
And the ground
Shall be fill'd with life anew.



"SO LET THE WIND RANGE."

The world was never made ;
It will change, but it will not fade.
So let the wind range ;
For even and morn
Ever will be
Thro' eternity.
Nothing was born ;
Nothing will die ;
All things will change.



“THE BLUE RIVER CHIMES IN ITS FLOWING.”

ALL THINGS WILL DIE.

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye ;
Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing
Over the sky.
One after another the white clouds are fleeting ;
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating
Full merrily ;
Yet all things must die.
The stream will cease to flow ;
The wind will cease to blow ;
The clouds will cease to fleet ;
The heart will cease to beat ;
For all things must die.
All things must die.
Spring will come never more.
Oh ! vanity !
Death waits at the door.

See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are call'd— we must go.
Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still ;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh ! misery !
Hark ! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing ;
Ice with the warm blood mixing ;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell :
Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.

And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore ;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Thro' eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS.

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming the broad valley
dimm'd in the gloaming :
Thro' the black-stemm'd pines only the far river
shines.
Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and bowers of rose-
blowing bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets babble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerily ; the grasshop-
per carolleth clearly ;
Deeply the wood-dove coos ; shrilly the owlet hal-
loos ;
Winds creep ; dews fall chilly : in her first sleep
earth breathes stilly :
Over the pools in the burn water-gnats murmur and
mourn.
Sadly the far kine loweth : the glimmering water
out-floweth :
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope to the dark
hyaline.
Low-throned Hesper is stayed between the two
peaks ; but the Naiad
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him beneath in her
breast.
The ancient poetess singeth, that Hesperus all
things bringeth,

Smoothing the wearied mind : bring me my love,
Rosalind.

Thou comest morning or even ; she cometh not
morning or even.

False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is my sweet
Rosalind ?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND.

O GOD ! my God ! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that Thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn.
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul. — That even now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign ! and if a bolt of fire
Would rive the slumbrous summer moon
While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow !
Is not my human pride brought low ?
The boastings of my spirit still ?
The joy I had in my free-will
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like grown :
And what is left to me, but Thou,
And faith in Thee ? Men pass me by ;
Christians with happy countenances —
And children all seem full of Thee !
And women smile with saint-like glances
Like Thine own mother's when she bow'd
Above Thee, on that happy morn

When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were born.
Good-will to me as well as all —
I one of them : my brothers they :
Brothers in Christ — a world of peace
And confidence, day after day ;
And trust and hope till things should cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith !
To hold a common scorn of death !
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and eat
Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing sweet !

Thrice happy state again to be
The trustful infant on the knee !
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes.
They comfort him by night and day ;
They light his little life alway ;
He hath no thought of coming woes ;
He hath no care of life or death ;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness
And perfect rest so inward is ;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,

Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfil him with beatitude.
Oh ! sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,
To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with brows
Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows,
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer —
For me unworthy ! — and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that knew
The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
Oh ! wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep ? why dare
Paths in the desert ? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou has knelt,
To the earth — until the ice would melt
Here, and I feel as thou has felt ?
What Devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd — to brush the dew
From thine own lily, when thy grave

Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why pray
To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and strong
Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What if
Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at even-song,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive,
In deep and daily prayers would'st strive
To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldest murmur still —
“Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.”
Would'st tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;
That pride, the sin of devils, stood
Betwixt me and the light of God!
That hithero I had defied
And had rejected God — that grace
Would drop from his o'er-brimming love,
As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray — that God would move
And strike the hard, hard rock, and thence,
Sweet in their utmost bitterness,

Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life. Alas!
I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void,
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.
Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope waves
After a tempest, rib and fret
The broad-imbased beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue Heaven which hues and paves
The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken : my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and fear.

“ Yet,” said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my strength,
When I went forth in quest of truth,
“ It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length,
Truth may stand forth unmoved of change,
An image with profulgent brows,
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out

This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the Ox
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills
In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,



"HOLLOWS OF THE FRINGED HILLS."

And answers to his mother's calls
From the flower'd furrow. In a time,
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from whence
He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope

As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on?
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that seem,
And things that be, and analyse
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be?" Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp Idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I Idol? Let Thy dove
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. Oh teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
O spirit and heart made desolate!
O damned vacillating state!

THE KRAKEN.

BELOW the thunders of the upper deep ;
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded sleep
The Kraken sleepeth : faintest sunlights flee
About his shadowy sides : above him swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth and height ;
And far away into the sickly light,
From many a wondrous grot and secret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumbering green.
There hath he lain for ages and will lie
Battenning upon huge seaworms in his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the deep ;
Then once by man and angels to be seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the surface die.

SONG.

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
 Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
 With mellow preludes, "We are free."

The streams thro' many a liliated row
 Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
 Atween the blossoms, "We are free."



I.

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me,
Claps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can ;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II.

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks :
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,

From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughs dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks ;
Then away she flies.

III.

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
Gaiety without eclipse
Wearieth me, May Lilian :
Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
When from crimson-threaded lips
Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
Prythee weep, May Lilian.

IV.

Praying all I can,
If prayers will not hush thee,
Airy Lilian,
Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL.

I.

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed
With the clear-pointed flame of chastity,
Clear, without heat, undying, tended by
Pure vestal thoughts in the translucent fane
Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dispread,
Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
Sweet lips whereon perpetually did reign
The summer calm of golden charity,
Were fixed shadows of thy fixed mood,
Revered Isabel, the crown and head,
The stately flower of female fortitude,
Of perfect wifehood and pure lowlihead.

II.

The intuitive decision of a bright
And thorough-edged intellect to part
Error from crime ; a prudence to withhold ;
The laws of marriage character'd in gold
Upon the blanched tablets of her heart ;
A love still burning upward, giving light
To read those laws ; an accent very low
In blandishment, but a most silver flow
Of subtle-paced counsel in distress,

Right to the heart and brain, tho' undescried,
 Winning its way with extreme gentleness
Thro' all the outworks of suspicious pride ;
A courage to endure and to obey ;
A hate of gossip parlance, and of sway,
Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid life,
The queen of marriage, a most perfect wife.

III.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;
A clear stream flowing with a muddy one,
 Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in purer light
 The vexed eddies of its wayward brother:
A leaning and upbearing parasite,
Clothing the stem, which else had fallen quite
With cluster'd flower-bells and ambrosial orbs
 Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on each other —
Shadow forth thee :— the world hath not another
(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of thee,
And thou of God in thy great charity)
Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA.

“Mariana in the moated grange.”

Measure for Measure.

WITH blackest moss the flower-plots
Were thickly crusted, one and all :
The rusted nails fell from the knots
That held the pear to the gable-wall.
The broken sheds look'd sad and strange :
Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, “My life is dreary,
He cometh not,” she said ;
She said, “I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead !”

Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried ;
She could not look on the sweet Heaven,
Either at morn or eventide.
After the flitting of the bats,
When thickest dark did trance the sky,
So drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming flats.



"I WOULD THAT I WERE DEAD!"

She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl crow :
The cock sung out an hour ere light :
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her : without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
Hard by the poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark :
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said ;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

And ever when the moon was low,
And the shrill winds were up and away,
In the white curtain, to and fro,
She saw the gusty shadow sway.
But when the moon was very low,
And wild winds bound within their cell,
The shadow of the poplar fell
Upon her bed, across her brow.
She only said, "The night is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
Or from the crevice peer'd about.
Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead!"

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound

Her sense ; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.

Then, said she, "I am very dreary,

He will not come," she said ;

She wept, "I am aweary, aweary,

Oh God, that I were dead !"

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH.

WITH one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines :
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But "Ave Mary," made she moan,
And "Ave Mary," night and morn,
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest brown
To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine,
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear.
And "Ave Mary," was her moan,
"Madonna, sad is night and morn,"
And "Ah," she sang, "to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn."

Till all the crimson changed, and past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she ;
Complaining, " Mother, give me
 grace
To help me of my weary load."
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.

" Is this the form," she made
 her moan,

" That won his praises night
 and morn ?"

And " Ah," she said, " but I
 wake alone,

I sleep forgotten, I wake forlorn."



" LOW ON HER KNEES HER-
SELF SHE CAST."

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would bleat,
Nor any cloud would cross the vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming salt ;
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.
She breathed in sleep a lower moan,
And murmuring, as at night and morn,
She thought, " My spirit is here alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn."

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream :
She felt he was and was not there.

She woke : the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and small.
The river-bed was dusty-white ;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan
More inward than at night or morn,
"Sweet Mother, let me not here alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn."

And, rising, from her bosom drew
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For "Love," they said, "must needs be true,
To what is loveliest on earth."
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say
"But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore."
"O cruel heart," she changed her tone,
"And cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn?"

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
"But thou shalt be alone no more."
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.

“The day to night,” she made her moan,
“The day to night, the night to morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright
Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent spheres
Heaven over Heaven rose the night.
And weeping then she made her moan,
“The night comes on that knows not morn,
When I shall cease to be all alone,
To live forgotten, and love forlorn.”

TO —.

I.

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful scorn,
Edged with sharp laughter, cuts atwain
The knots that tangle human creeds,
The wounding cords that bind and strain
The heart until it bleeds,
Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
Roof not a glance so keen as thine :
If aught of prophecy be mine,
Thou wilt not live in vain.

II.

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit ;
Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow :
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now
With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
Nor martyr-flames nor trenchant swords
Can do away that ancient lie ;
A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
Shot thro' and thro' with cunning words.

III.

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost need,
Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
Until she be an athlete bold,

And weary with a finger's touch
Those writhed limbs of lightning speed ;
Like that strange angel which of old,
Until the breaking of the light,
Wrestled with wandering Israel,
Past Yabbok brook the livelong night,
And Heaven's mazed signs stood still
In the dim tract of Penueel.



“ UNTIL THE BREAKING OF THE LIGHT. ”

MADELINE.

I.

THOU art not steep'd in golden langours,
No tranced summer calm is thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thro' light and shadow thou dost range,
Sudden glances sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of flitting change.

II.

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles: but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleeter?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-glooming over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are thine,
Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;

Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momently shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine ;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III.

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances :
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown :
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest ;
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile ;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angerly ;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG — THE OWL.

I.

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,
And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II.

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay ;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.



"WHEN MERRY MILKMAIDS CLICK THE LATCH."

SECOND SONG.

TO THE SAME.

I.

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II.

I would mock thy chaunt anew ;
But I cannot mimick it ;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tuwhoo-o-o.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN
NIGHTS.

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time ;



“ BY GARDEN PORCHES ON THE BRIM, THE COSTLY DOORS
FLUNG OPEN WIDE,”

And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old ;

True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Anight my shallop, rustling thro'
The low and bloomed foliage, drove
The fragrant, glistening deeps, and clove
The citron-shadows in the blue :
By garden porches on the brim,
The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
And broider'd sofas on each side :
In sooth it was a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often where clear-stemm'd platans guard
The outlet, did I turn away
The boat-head down a broad canal
From the main river sluiced, where all
The sloping of the moon-lit sward
Was damask-work, and deep inlay
Of braided blooms unmown, which crept
Adown to where the water slept.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
Until another night in night

I enter'd, from the clearer light,
Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
Imprisoning sweets, which, as they clomb
Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the dome
Of hollow boughs. — A goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward ; and the clear canal
Is rounded to as clear a lake.
From the green rivage many a fall
Of diamond rillets musical,
Thro' little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fall'n silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.
A goodly place, a goodly time,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
A walk with vary-colour'd shells
Wander'd engrain'd. On either side
All round about the fragrant marge
From fluted vase, and brazen urn
In order, eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low their crimson bells
Half-closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
In closest coverture upsprung,
The living airs of middle night
Died round the bulbul as he sung ;
Not he : but something which possess'd
The darkness of the world, delight,
Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
 Apart from place, withholding time,
 But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
Slumber'd : the solemn palms were ranged
Above, unwoo'd of summer wind :
A sudden splendour from behind
Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-green,
And, flowing rapidly between
Their interspaces, counterchanged
The level lake with diamond-plots
 Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
Distinct with vivid stars inlaid,
Grew darker from that under-flame :
So, leaping lightly from the boat,
With silver anchor left afloat,
In marvel whence that glory came
Upon me, as in sleep I sank
In cool soft turf upon the bank,

Entranced with that place and time,
So worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —
A realm of pleasance, many a mound,
And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
Full of the city's stilly sound,
And deep myrrh-thickets blowing round
The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time,
And humour of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame



The hollow-vaulted dark,
 and stream'd
 Upon the mooned domes
 aloof
 In inmost Bagdat, till
 there seem'd
 Hundreds of crescents on
 the roof
 Of night new-risen, that
 marvellous time
 To celebrate the golden
 prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

"THE SWEETEST LADY OF THE TIME." Then stole I up, and
 trancedly

Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
 Serene with argent-lidded eyes
 Amorous, and lashes like to rays
 Of darkness, and a brow of pearl
 Tressed with redolent ebony,
 In many a dark delicious curl,
 Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone ;
 The sweetest lady of the time,
 Well worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
 Pure silver, underpropt a rich
 Throne of the massive ore, from which
 Down-droop'd, in many a floating fold,

Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of gold.
Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride,
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

I.

THOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present ; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire !
Strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II.

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day ; but robed in soften'd light
Of orient state.
Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
Even as a maid, whose stately brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn have kiss'd,
When, she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely freight
Of overflowing blooms, and earliest shoots
Of orient green, giving safe pledge of fruits,
Which in winter-tide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare.

III.

Whilome thou camest with the morning mist,
And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into my open breast
(Those peerless flowers which in the rudest wind
Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the year).
Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest
Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope.
The eddying of her garments caught from thee
The light of thy great presence ; and the cope
Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Tho' deep not fathomless,
Was cloven with the million stars which tremble
O'er the deep mind of dauntless infancy.
Small thought was there of life's distress ;
For sure she deem'd no mist of earth could dull
Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and beautiful :
Sure she was nigher to Heaven's spheres,
Listening the lordly music flowing from
The illimitable years.
O strengthen me, enlighten me !
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV.

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad eyes !
Thou comest not with shows of flaunting vines

Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory !
Thou wert not nursed by the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the wall
Of purple cliffs, aloof descried :
Come from the woods that belt the gray hill-side,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that loves
To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed sand,
Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough woodland,
O ! hither lead thy feet !
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled folds,
Upon the ridged wolds,
When the first matin-song hath waken'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung cloud.

v.

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present
When first she is wed ;
And like a bride of old
In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
In setting round thy first experiment
With royal frame-work of wrought gold ;
Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
And foremost in thy various gallery
Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
Upon the storied walls ;
For the discovery
And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
With thee unto the love thou bearest
The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
Ever retiring thou dost gaze
On the prime labour of thine early days :
No matter what the sketch might be ;
Whether the high field on the bushless Pike,
Or even a sand-built ridge
Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
Overblown with murmurs harsh,
Or even a lowly cottage whence we see
Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
Where from the frequent bridge,
Like emblems of infinity,
The trenched waters run from sky to sky ;
Or a garden bower'd close
With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
Or opening upon level plots
Or crowned lilies, standing near
Purple-spiked lavender :

Whither in after life retired
From brawling storms,
From weary wind,
With youthful fancy re-inspired,
 We may hold converse with all forms
Of the many-sided mind,
And those whom passion hath not blinded,
Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre and a throne!
O strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.



I.

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers :
To himself he talks ;

For at eventide, listening earnestly,
At his work you may hear him sob and sigh
 In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
Of the mouldering flowers :
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II.

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
As a sick man's room when he taketh repose
 An hour before death ;
My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
 And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER.

WITH a half-glance upon the sky
At night he said, "The wanderings
Of this most intricate Universe
Teach me the nothingness of things."
Yet could not all creation pierce
Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty : that the dull
Saw no divinity in grass,
Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;
Then looking as 'twere in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue : not the gods
More purely, when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by :
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds

Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold :
Upon himself himself did feed :
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET.

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above ;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay : with echoing feet he threaded
The secretest walks of fame :
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
Them earthward till they lit ;
Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire.
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burning eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies ;
But round about the circles of the globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake

All evil dreams of power— a sacred name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder
Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
She shook the world.



THE POET'S MIND.

I.

VEX not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit :
Vex not thou the poet's mind ;
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river ;
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II.

Dark-brow'd sophist, come not anear ;
All the place is holy ground ;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
Into every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.
In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.

In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants.
It would fall to the ground if you came in.

In the middle leaps a fountain

Like sheet lightning,

Ever brightening

With a low melodious thunder ;

All day and all night it is ever drawn

From the brain of the purple mountain

Which stands in the distance yonder :

It springs on a level of bowery lawn,

And the mountain draws it from Heaven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;

And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and full,

You never would hear it ; your ears are so dull ;

So keep where you are : you are foul with sin ;

It would shrink to the earth if you came in.



THE SEA-FAIRIES.

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the running foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
To little harps of gold ; and while they mused
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the middle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither away ? fly no
more.

Whither away from the high green field, and the
happy blossoming shore ?

Day and night to the billow the fountain calls :

Down shower the gambolling waterfalls

From wandering o'er the lea :

Out of the live-green heart of the dells

They freshen the silvery-crimson shells,

And thick with white bells the clover-hill swells

High over the full-toned sea :

O hither, come hither and furl your sails,
Come hither to me and to me :
Hither, come hither and frolic and play ;
Here it is only the mew that wails ;
We will sing to you all the day :
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on the land
Over the islands free ;
And the rainbow lives in the curve of the sand ;
Hither, come hither and see ;
And the rainbow hangs on the poising wave,
And sweet is the colour of cove and cave,
And sweet shall your welcome be :
O hither, come hither, and be our lords,
For merry brides are we :
We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak sweet words :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee :
O listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the golden chords
Runs up the ridged sea.
Who can light on as happy a shore
All the world o'er, all the world o'er?
Whither away? listen and stay : mariner, mariner,
fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE.

I.

LIFE and Thought have gone away
Side by side,
Leaving door and windows wide :
Careless tenants they !

II.

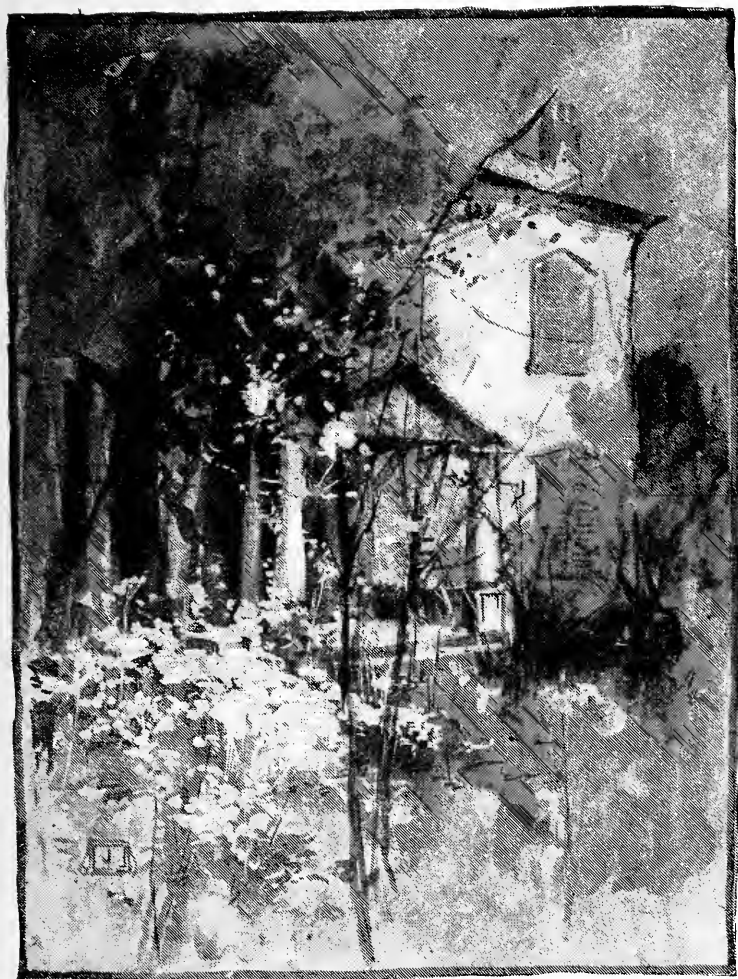
All within is dark as night :
In the windows is no light
And no murmur at the door,
So frequent on its hinge before.

III.

Close the door, the shutters close,
Or thro' the windows we shall see
The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV.

Come away : no more of mirth
Is here or merry-making sound.
The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.



"THE DARK DESERTED HOUSE."

V.

Come away : for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell ;
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with us !

THE DYING SWAN.

I.

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
 An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
 And loudly did lament.
 It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on,
 And took the reed-tops as it went.

II.

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky,
Shone out their crowning snows.
 One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did sigh;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
 Chasing itself at its own wild will,
 And far thro' the marish green and still
 The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and yellow.

III.

The wild swan's death-hymn took the soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow : at first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach stole



“THE SHEPHERD WHO WATCHETH THE EVENING STAR.”

Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;
As when a mighty people rejoice
With shawms, and with cymbals, and harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the evening star.

And the creeping mosses and clambering weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and dank,
And the wavy swell of the sougning reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echoing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that throng
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE.

I.

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

II.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

III.

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny?

Let them rave.

Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV.

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglatere
Drip sweeter dews than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.
Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V.

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI.

The gold-eyed kingcups fine ;
The frail bluebell peereth over
Rare broidry of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII.

Wild words wander here and there :
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused :

But let them rave.

The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH.

WHAT time the mighty moon was gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Paradise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia, full in view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a yew,
And talking to himself, first met his sight :
" You must begone," said Death, " these walks are
mine."

Love wept and spread his sheeny vans for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, " This hour is thine :
Thou art the shadow of life, and as the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all beneath,
So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death ;
The shadow passeth when the tree shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all."

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA.

My heart is wasted with my woe,

Oriana.

There is no rest for me below,

Oriana.

When the long dun wolds are ribb'd with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds blow,

Oriana,

Alone I wander to and fro,

Oriana.

Ere the light on dark was growing,

Oriana,

At midnight the cock was crowing,

Oriana :

Winds were blowing, waters flowing,

We heard the steeds to battle going,

Oriana ;

Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,

Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,

Oriana,

Ere I rode into the fight,

Oriana,

While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.



"SHE STOOD UPON THE CASTLE WALL."

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana :
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana :

She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana :
The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my bride,
Oriana !
Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana !

Oh ! narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana.
Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.
Oh ! deathful stabs were dealt apace,
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana ;
But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana !
How could I rise and come away,
Oriana ?

How could I look upon the day?
They should have stabb'd me where I lay,
Oriana —
They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana !
O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana !
Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my cheek,
Oriana :
What wantest thou? whom dost thou seek,
Oriana ?

I cry aloud ; none hear my cries,
Oriana.
Thou comest atween me and the skies,
Oriana.
I feel the tears of blood arise
Up from my heart unto my eyes,
Oriana.
Within thy heart my arrow lies,
Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow !
Oriana !
O happy thou that liest low,
Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow
Beside me in my utter woe,

Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,

Oriana.

When Norland winds pipe down the sea,

Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,

Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,

I dare not die and come to thee,

Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,

Oriana.



CIRCUMSTANCE.

Two children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas ;
Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall ;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease ;
Two graves grass-green beside a gray church-tower,
Wash'd with still rains and daisy blossomed ;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred ;
So runs the round of life from hour to hour.



THE MERMAN.

I.

WHO would be
A merman bold,
Sitting alone,
Singing alone
Under the sea,
With a crown of gold,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a merman bold,
I would sit and sing the whole of the day ;
I would fill the sea-halls with a voice of power ;
But at night I would roam abroad and play
With the mermaids in and out of the rocks,
Dressing their hair with the white sea-flower ;
And holding them back by their flowing locks
I would kiss them often under the sea,
And kiss them again till they kiss'd me
Laughingly, laughingly ;
And then we would wander away, away
To the pale-green sea-groves straight and high,
Chasing each other merrily.

III.

There would be neither moon nor star ;
But the wave would make music above us afar —
Low thunder and light in the magic night —

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy dells,
Call to each other and whoop and cry

All night, merrily, merrily ;

They would pelt me with starry spangles and shells,
Laughing and clapping their hands between,

All night, merrily, merrily :

But I would throw to them back in mine
Turkis and agate and almandine :

Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,

And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly.

Oh ! what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green !

Soft are the moss-beds under the sea ;

We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID.

I.

WHO would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II.

I would be a mer-
maid fair ;
I would sing to myself
the whole of the
day ;
With a comb of pearl
I would comb my
hair ;



"A MERMAID FAIR."

And still as I comb'd I would sing and say,
"Who is it loves me? who loves not me?"
I would comb my hair till my ringlets would fall
 Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
 Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of gold
 Springing alone
 With a shrill inner sound,
 Over the throne
 In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III.

But at night I would wander away, away,
 I would fling on each side my low-flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and play
 With the mermen in and out of the rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide and seek,
 On the broad sea-wolds in the crimson shells,
 Whose silvery spikes are nighest the sea.
But if any came near I would call, and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I would leap

From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who would list,
Of the bold merry mermen under the sea ;
They would sue me, and woo me, and flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea ;
But the king of them all would carry me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry me,
In the branching jaspers under the sea ;
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet silently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from aloft
All things that are forked, and horned, and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.



ADELINE.

I.

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair ;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

II.

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline,
And a rose-bush leans upon,
Thou that faintly smilest still,
As a Naiad in a well,
Looking at the set of day,
Or a phantom two hours old
Of a maiden past away,
Ere the placid lips be cold ?

Wherefore those faint smiles of thine,
Spiritual Adeline?

III.

What hope or fear or joy is thine?
Who talketh with thee, Adeline?
For sure thou art not all alone.
Do beating hearts of salient springs.
Keep measure with thine own?
Hast thou heard the butterflies
What they say betwixt their wings?
Or in stillest evenings
With what voice the violet woos
To his heart the silver dews?
Or when little airs arise,
How the merry bluebell rings
To the mosses underneath?
Hast thou look'd upon the breath
Of the lilies at sunrise?
Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

IV.

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
Some spirit of a crimson rose
In love with thee forgets to close
His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
All night long on darkness blind.
What aileth thee? whom waitest thou
With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,

And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
Thou faint smiler, Adeline?

V.

Lovest thou the doleful wind
When thou gazest at the skies?
Doth the low-tongued Orient
Wander from the side of the morn,
Dripping with Sabæan spice
On thy pillow, lowly bent
With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays?
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET.

I.

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you love, your mortal dower
 Of pensive thought and aspect pale,
 Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo-flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
 From all things outward you have won
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
 Between the rainbow and the sun.
The very smile before you speak,
 That dimples your transparent cheek,
 Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
 Of dainty sorrow without sound,
 Like the tender amber round,
 Which the moon about her spreadeth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II.

You love, remaining peacefully,
 To hear the murmur of the strife,
 But enter not the toil of life.

Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, alway



"OF PENSIVE THOUGHT AND ASPECT PALE."

Remaining betwixt dark and bright :
Lull'd echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow light
Float by you on the verge of night.

III.

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning stars
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
Sang looking thro' his prison bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well?

IV.

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker hue,
And less ærially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

v.

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me speak :
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek :
 The sun is just about to set,
The arching lines are tall and shady,
 And faint, rainy lights are seen,
 Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
 Where all day long you sit between
 Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
 Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes dawn
 Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND.

I.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,
Whose free delight, from any height of rapid flight,
Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon, whither,
Careless both of wind and weather,
Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
Up or down the streaming wind?

II.

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd strains,
The shadow rushing up the sea,
The lightning flash atween the rains,
The sunlight driving down the lea,
The leaping stream, the very wind,
That will not stay, upon his way,
To stoop the cowslip to the plains,

Is not so clear and bold and free
As you, my falcon Rosalind.
You care not for another's pains,
Because you are the soul of joy,
Bright metal all without alloy.
Life shoots and glances thro' your veins,
And flashes off a thousand ways,
Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
Keen with triumph, watching still
To pierce me thro' with pointed light ;
But oftentimes they flash and glitter
Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
And your words are seeming-bitter,
Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
From excess of swift delight.

III.

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
My gay young hawk, my Rosalind :
Too long you keep the upper skies ;
Too long you roam and wheel at will ;
But we must hood your random eyes,
That care not whom they kill,
And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
Some red heath-flower in the dew,
Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
And keep you fast, my Rosalind,

Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
And clip your wings, and make you love :
When we have lured you from above,
And that delight of frolic flight, by day or night,
 From North to South,
 We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.

ELEANORE.

I.

THY dark eyes open'd not,
Nor first reveal'd themselves to English air,
For there is nothing here,
Which, from the outward to the inward brought,
Moulded thy baby thought.
Far off from human neighbourhood,
Thou wert born, on a summer morn,
A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
With breezes from our oaken glades,
But thou wert nursed in some delicious land
Of lavish lights, and floating shades :
And flattering thy childish thought
The oriental fairy brought,
At the moment of thy birth,
From old well-heads of haunted rills,
And the hearts of purple hills,
And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
The choicest wealth of all the earth,
Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.

II.

Or the yellow-banded bees,
Thro' half-open lattices
Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gardens cull'd —
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.

III.

Who may minister to thee?
Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
Youngest Autumn, in a bower
Grape-thicken'd from the light, and blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like flower
Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the Heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the Even,
 All along the shadowing shore,
Crimsons over an inland mere,
 Eleänore !

IV.

How may full-sail'd verse express,
 How may measured words adore

Thy full-flowing harmony
Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleänore?
The luxuriant symmetry
Of thy floating gracefulness,
 Eleänore?
Every turn and glance of thine,
Every lineament divine,
 Eleänore,
And the steady sunset glow,
That stays upon thee? For in thee
Is nothing sudden, nothing single ;
Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
Thought and motion mingle,
Mingle ever. Motions flow
To one another, even as tho'
They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
Which lives about thee, and a sweep
Of richest pauses, evermore
Drawn from each other mellow-deep ;
Who may express thee, Eleänore ?

v.

I stand before thee, Eleänore ;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
Daily and hourly, more and more.
I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.

I muse, as in a trance, whene'er
The languors of thy love-deep eyes
Float on to me. I would I were
So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
To stand apart, and to adore,
Gazing on thee for evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore !

VI.

Sometimes, with most intensity
Gazing, I seem to see
Thought folded over thought, smiling asleep,
Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and deep
In thy large eyes, that, overpower'd quite,
I cannot veil, or droop my sight,
But am as nothing in its light :
As tho' a star, in inmost Heaven set,
Ev'n while we gaze on it,
Should slowly round his orb, and slowly grow
To a full face, there like a sun remain
Fix'd — then slowly fade again,
And draw itself to what it was before ;
So full, so deep, so slow,
Thought seems to come and go
In thy large eyes, imperial Eleänore.

VII.

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,



“ON SILKEN CUSHIONS HALF RECLINED.”

Grow golden all about the sky ;
In thee all passion becomes passionless,
Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
Losing his fire and active might

In a silent meditation,
Falling into a still delight,
And luxury of contemplation :
As waves that up a quiet cove
Rolling slide, and lying still
Shadow forth the banks at will :
Or sometimes they swell and move,
Pressing up against the land,
With motions of the outer sea :
And the self-same influence
Controlleth all the soul and sense
Of Passion gazing upon thee.
His bow-string slacken'd, languid Love,
Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
Droops both his wings, regarding thee.
And so would languish evermore,
Serene, imperial Eleänore.

VIII.

But when I see thee roam, with tresses unconfined,
While the amorous, odorous wind
Breathes low between the sunset and the moon ;
Or, in a shadowy saloon,
On silken cushions half reclined ;
I watch thy grace ; and in its place
My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face ;
And a languid fire creeps
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly : soon

From thy rose-red lips MY name
Floweth ; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,
My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my colour, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of warmest life.
I die with my delight, before
I hear what I would hear from thee ;
Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, Eleänore.

"MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS."

I.

My life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wander'd into other ways :
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go :
Shake hands once more : I cannot sink
So far — far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.

II.

When in the darkness over me
The four-handed mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.



"MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS"

And when the sappy field and wood
 Grow green beneath the showery gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,
 And thro' damp holts new-flush'd with may,
 Ring sudden scritchings of the jay.

Then let wise Nature work her will,
 And on my clay her darnel grow ;
Come only, when the days are still,
 And at my headstone whisper low,
 And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS.



I.

TO ———.

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused dream
To states of mystical similitude ;
If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, " All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or where."
So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,
Our thought gave answer each to each, so true —
Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —
That tho' I knew not in what time or place,
Methought that I had often met with you,
And either lived in either's heart and speech.

II.

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt be
A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
Thou art no sabbath-drawler of old saws,
Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
To embattail and to wall about thy cause
With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
Half God's good sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

III.

MINE be the strength of spirit, full and free,
Like some broad river rushing down alone,
With the self-same impulse wherewith he was thrown
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea :—
Which with increasing might doth forward flee
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,
And in the middle of the green salt sea
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.
Mine be the power which ever to its sway
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
May into uncongenial spirits flow ;
Ev'n as the warm gulf-stream of Florida
Floats far away into the Northern seas
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

IV.

ALEXANDER.

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased
The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled
At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced
For ever -- thee (thy pathway sand-erased)
Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led
Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed
Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
There in a silent shade of laurel brown
Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries :
High things were spoken there, unhandled down ;
Only they saw thee from the secret shrine
Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

V.

BUONAPARTE.

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
Madman ! — to chain with chains, and bind with
bands

That island queen who sways the floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight woke,
When from her wooden walls, — lit by sure hands, —
With thunders, and with lightnings, and with
smoke, —

Peal after peal, the British battle broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with sudden fires
Flamed over : at Trafalgar yet once more
We taught him : late he learned humility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon school'd with
briers.

VI.

POLAND.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
And trampled under by the last and least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth drown
The fields, and out of every smouldering town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be increased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the East
Transgress his ample bound to some new crown : —
Cries to thee, " Lord, how long shall these things be.
How long this icy-hearted Muscovite
Oppress the region?" Us, O Just and Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was torn in three ;
Us, who stand now, when we should aid the right —
A matter to be wept with tears of blood !

VII.

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp and flat ;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his rosy band,
And chased away the still-recurring gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy land.
But now they live with Beauty less and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious creeds ;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.



"A SINGLE STAR, THAT SETS AT TWILIGHT IN A LAND
OF REEDS."

VIII.

THE form, the form alone is eloquent !
A nobler yearning never broke her rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplishment :
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beauteous breast
That once had power to rob it of content.
A moment came the tenderness of tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could move,
A ghost of passion that no smiles restore —
For ah ! the slight coquette, she cannot love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand years,
She still would take the praise, and care no more.

IX.

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near thee lie?
O sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for the past,
In painting some dead friend from memory?
Weep on : beyond his object Love can last :
His object lives : more cause to weep have I :
My tears, no tears of love, are flowing fast,
No tears of love, but tears that Love can die.
I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
Nor care to sit beside her where she sits —
Ah pity — hint it not in human tones,
But breathe it into earth and close it up
With secret death for ever, in the pits
Which some green Christmas crams with weary
bones.

X.

IF I were loved, as I desire to be,
What is there in the great sphere of the earth,
And range of evil between death and birth,
That I should fear, — if I were loved by thee?
All the inner, all the outer world of pain
Clear Love would pierce and cleave, if thou wert
mine,
As I have heard that, somewhere in the main,
Fresh-water springs come up through bitter brine.
'Twere joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-hand with thee,
To wait for death — mute — careless of all ills,
Apart upon a mountain, tho' the surge
Of some new deluge from a thousand hills
Flung leagues of roaring foam into the gorge
Below us, as far on as eye could see.



"IF I WERE LOVED, AS I DESIRE TO BE."

XI.

THE BRIDESMAID.

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot was tied,
Thine eyes so wept that they could hardly see ;
Thy sister smiled and said, " No tears for me !
A happy bridesmaid makes a happy bride."
And then, the couple standing side by side,
Love lighted down between them full of glee,
And over his left shoulder laugh'd at thee.
" O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride."
And all at once a pleasant truth I learn'd,
For while the tender service made thee weep,
I loved thee for the tear thou couldst not hide,
And prest thy hand, and knew the press return'd,
And thought, " My life is sick of single sleep :
O happy bridesmaid, make a happy bride !"

THE LADY OF SHALOTT.

PART I.

ON either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,



“THE LADY OF SHALOTT.”

That clothe the wold and meet the sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by

To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses ; and unhail'd
The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot :
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott ?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
Down to tower'd Camelot :

And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II.

THERE she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
 To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot ;

And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two :
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot :
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed ;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III.

A BOW-SHOT from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled in the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot

And from his blazon'd baldric slung
A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd ;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode ;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.

Out flew the web and floated wide ;
The mirror crack'd from side to side ;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV.

IN the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot ;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay ;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —



"THE MIRROR CRACK'D FROM SIDE TO SIDE."

The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night

She floated down to Camelot :
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly

Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.

Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,

 All the knights at Camelot :
But Lancelot mused a little space ;
He said, "She has a lovely face ;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The Lady of Shalott."



THE TWO VOICES.

A STILL, small voice spake unto me,
"Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?"

Then to the still small voice I said ;
"Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made."

To which the voice did urge reply ;
"To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

"An inner impulse rent the veil
Of his old husk : from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

"He dried his wings : like gauze they grew ;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew."

I said, "When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

"She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest,
Dominion in the head and breast."

Thereto the silent voice replied ;
"Self-blinded are you by your pride :
Look up thro' night : the world is wide.

"This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

"Think you this mould of hopes and fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres ?"

It spake, moreover, in my mind :
"Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind."

Then did my response clearer fall :
"No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all."

To which he answer'd scoffingly ;
"Good soul ! suppose I grant it thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency ?

"Or will one beam be less intense,
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense ?"

I would have said, "Thou canst not know,"
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me :
"Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 'twere better not to be.

"Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep :
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt weep."

I said, "The years with change advance :
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

"Some turn the sickness yet might take,
Ev'n yet." But he : "What drug can make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?"

I wept, "Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow ;

"And men, thro' novel spheres of thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not."

"Yet," said the secret voice, "some time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

“ Not less swift souls that yearn for light,
Rapt after Heaven’s starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and night.

“ Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickle fire the dells,
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.”

I said that “ all the years invent ;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

“ Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Tho’ watching from a ruin’d tower
How grows the day of human power ? ”

“ The highest-mounted mind,” he said,
“ Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead.

“ Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main ?

“ Or make that morn, from his cold crown
And crystal silence creeping down,
Flood with full daylight glebe and town ?

“ Forerun thy peers, thy time, and let
Thy feet, milleniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream’d not yet.

"Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

"'Twere better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

"Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind."

I said, "When I am gone away,
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonour to my clay."

"This is more vile," he made reply,
"To breathe and loathe, to live and sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

"Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

"Do men love thee? Art thou so bound
To men, that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground?

"The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd Autumn-sheaf.

“Go, vexed Spirit, sleep in trust ;
The right ear, that is fill'd with dust,
Hears little of the false or just.”

“Hard task, to pluck resolve,” I cried,
“From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride !

“Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

“When, wide in soul and bold of tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

“I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the spear —

“Waiting to strive a happy strife,
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

“Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and love —

“As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb about —

“ To search thro’ all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law :

“ At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

“ To pass, when Life her light withdraws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —



“ AND LIKE A WARRIOR OVERTHROWN.”

“ In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honour’d, known,
And like a warrior overthrown ;

“ Whose eyes are dim with glorious tears,
When, soil’d with noble dust, he hears
His country’s war-song thrill his ears :

“ Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman’s line is broke,
And all the war is roll’d in smoke.”

“ Yea ! ” said the voice, “ thy dream was good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

“ If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower,
Who is it that could live an hour ?

“ Then comes the check, the change, the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

“ Yet hadst thou, thro’ enduring pain,
Link’d month to month with such a chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

“ Thou hadst not between death and birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth.
So were thy labour little worth.

“ That men with knowledge merely play’d
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho’ scaling slow from grade to grade ;

“ Much less this dreamer, deaf and blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to find,
That bears relation to the mind.

“ For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon.

“ Cry, faint not : either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

"Cry, faint not, climb : the summits slope
Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to cope.

"Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

"I will go forward, sayest thou,
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

"If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

"And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

"Than angels. Cease to wail and brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all."

"O dull, one-sided voice," said I,
"Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

"I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

“ I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven :

“ Who, rowing hard against the stream,
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

“ But heard, by secret transport led,
Ev’n in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —

“ Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forbore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

“ He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho’ cursed and scorn’d, and bruised with stones :

“ But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray’d, and from a happy place
God’s glory smote him on the face.”

The sullen answer slid betwixt
“ Not that the grounds of hope were fix’d,
The elements were kindlier mix’d.”

I said, “ I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe,
I fear to slide from bad to worse.

“ And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new :

“ Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and froz'n to permanence :

“ For I go, weak from suffering here :
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ? ”

“ Consider well,” the voice replied,
“ His face, that two hours since hath died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

“ Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

“ His palms are folded on his breast :
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

“ His lips are very mild and meek :
Tho' one should smite him on the cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

“ His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonour to her race —

“ His sons grow up that bear his name,
Some grow to honour, some to shame, —
But he is chill to praise or blame.

“ He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter crave
From winter rains that beat his grave.



“ WINTER RAINS THAT BEAT HIS GRAVE.”

“ High up the vapours fold and swim :
About him broods the twilight dim :
The place he knew forgetteth him.”

“ If all be dark, vague voice,” I said,
“ These things are wrapt in doubt and dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are dead.

“ The sap dries up : the plant declines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not Death ? the outward signs ?

“ I found him when my years were few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

“ From grave to grave the shadow crept :
In her still place the morning wept :
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

“ The simple senses crown'd his head :
' Omega ! thou art Lord,' they said,
' We find no motion in the dead.'

“ Why, if man rot in dreamless ease,
Should that plain fact, as taught by these,
Not make him sure that he shall cease ?

“ Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the sense ?

“ He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

“ Here sits he shaping wings to fly :
His heart forebodes a mystery :
He names the name Eternity.

“ That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

“ He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro’ thick veils to apprehend
A labour working to an end.

“ The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counterchecks.

“ He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something good,
He may not do the thing he would.

“ Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn,
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and withdrawn.

“ Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

“ But thou canst answer not again.
With thine own weapon art thou slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

“ The doubt would rest, I dare not solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.”

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced.

“ Where wert thou when thy father play’d
In his free field, and pastime made,
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

“ A merry boy they call’d him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again.

“ Before the little ducks began
To feed thy bones with lime, and ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

“ Who took a wife, who rear’d his race,
Whose wrinkles gather’d on his face,
Whose troubles number with his days :

“ A life of nothings, nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth ! ”

“ These words,” I said, “ are like the rest ;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast :

“ But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend —
That to begin implies to end ;

“ Yet how should I for certain hold,
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

"I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

"It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

"As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await
The slipping thro' from state to state.

"As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again.

"So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and touch.

"But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ;

"Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of night ;

"Or if thro' lower lives I came —
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame —

"I might forget my weaker lot;
For is not our first year forgot?
The haunts of memory echo not.

"And men, whose reason long was blind,
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

"Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory :

"For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime?

"Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic gleams,
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

"Of something felt, like something here ;
Of something done, I know not where ;
Such as no language may declare."

The still voice laugh'd. "I talk," said he,
"Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality."

"But thou," said I, "hast missed thy mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal ark,
By making all the horizon dark.

“Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might ensue
With this old soul in organs new?

“Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human breath
Has ever truly long’d for death.

“’Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,
Oh life, not death, for which we pant;
More life, and fuller, that I want.”

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn.
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn,
“Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.”

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften’d airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to peal.

On to God’s house the people prest:
Passing the place where each must rest,
Each enter’d like a welcome guest.

One walk’d between his wife and child,
With measured footfall firm and mild,
And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
Wearing the rose of womanhood.

And in their double love secure,
The little maiden walk'd demure,
Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet,
My frozen heart began to beat,
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on :
I spoke, but answer came there none :
The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
A little whisper silver-clear,
A murmur, "Be of better cheer."

As from some blissful neighbourhood,
A notice faintly understood,
"I see the end, and know the good."

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
"I may not speak of what I know."

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes :

Such seem'd the whisper at my side :
"What is it thou knowest, sweet voice?" I cried.
"A hidden hope," the voice replied :

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent.

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers :
You scarce could see the grass for flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along :
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, " Rejoice ! Rejoice ! "

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER.

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup —
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.

Yet fill my glass : give me one kiss :
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by.
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.



"IN YONDER CHAIR I SEE HIM SIT."

Have I not found a happy earth?
I least should breathe a thought of pain.
Would God renew me from my birth
I'd almost live my life again.
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine —
It seems in after-dinner talk
Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire :
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove
In firry woodlands making moan ;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.
For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dreamed that pleasant dream —
Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The mill-dam rushing down with noise,
And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,

The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,
Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
('Twas April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue ;
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of my brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song,
That went and came a thousand times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watched the little circles die ;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye ;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set,
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the ledge :



“THAT MORNING, ON THE CASEMENT-EDGE.”

And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and bright —
Such eyes ! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their light.

I loved, and love dispell'd the fear
That I should die an early death :
For love possess'd the atmosphere,
And fill'd the breast with purer breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter'd, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro' quiet meadows round the mill,
The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still,
The meal-sacks on the whiten'd floor,
The dark round of the dripping wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April's crescent glimmer'd cold,
I saw the village lights below ;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling hope,
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower'd slope.

The deep brook groan'd beneath the mill ;
And "by that lamp," I thought, "she sits !"
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
Gleam'd to the flying moon by fits.

“O that I were beside her now !
O will she answer if I call ?
O wou'd she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all ?”

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin ;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within ;
Sometimes your shadow cross'd the blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken'd there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white with May,
Your ripe lips moved not, but your cheek
Flush'd like the coming of the day ;
And so it was — half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little one !
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire :
She wish'd me happy, but she thought
I might have look'd a little higher ;
And I was young — too young to wed :
“Yet must I love her for your sake ;
Go fetch your Alice here,” she said :
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride :
But, Alice, you were ill at ease ;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not please.
I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well ;
And dew, that would have fall'n in tears,
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see ;
She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of me ;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart.

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers—that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel
That trembles in her ear :



"IT IS THE MILLER'S
DAUGHTER."

For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and
white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against
me,

In sorrow and in rest:
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and
tight.

And I would be the necklace,
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs,
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells —
True love interprets — right alone.
His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own.
So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early rage
Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,

Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart :
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot,
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue Forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget ?
Many suns arise and set.
Many a chance the years beget.
Love the gift if Love the debt.
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret.
Love is made a vague regret.
Eyes with idle tears are wet.
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget :
Ah, no ! no !

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True wife,
Round my true heart thine arms entwine
My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine !
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell !
They have not shed a many tears,
Dear eyes, since first I knew them well.

Yet tears they shed : they had their part
Of sorrow : for when time was ripe,
The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,
And left a want unknown before ;
Although the loss had brought us pain,
That loss but made us love the more,

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be
Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee :
But that God bless thee, dear — who wrought
Two spirits to one equal mind —
With blessings beyond hope or thought,
With blessings which no words can find.

Arise, and let us wander forth,
To yon old mill across the wolds ;
For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,
And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below :
On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA.

O, LOVE, Love, Love ! O withering might !
O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,
Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light,.

Lo, falling from my constant mind,
Lo, parched and wither'd, deaf and blind,
I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers :
I thirsted for the brooks, the showers :
I roll'd among the tender flowers :
I crushed them on my breast, my mouth ;
I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his name,
From my swift blood that went and came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame. .
O Love, O fire ! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.



"BELOW THE CITY'S EASTERN TOWERS."

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly : from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens, blow
Before him, striking on my brow.

 In my dry brain my spirit soon,
 Down-deepening from swoon to swoon,
 Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire ;
 And, isled in sudden seas of light,
 My heart, pierced thro' with fierce delight,
 Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye :
I *will* possess him or will die.

 I will grow round him in his place,
 Grow, live, die looking on his face,
 Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

ŒNONE.

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning : but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

For now the noonday quiet holds the hill :
The grasshopper is silent in the grass :
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops : the golden bee
Is lily-cradled : I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love,
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake ! O mountain
 brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape : for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

“O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine :
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft :
 Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With down-dropt eyes
 I sat alone : white breasted like a star
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leopard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a God's :
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
 When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
 That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
 And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
 Came down upon my heart.

' My own *Ænone*,
 Beautiful-brow'd *Ænone*, my own soul,
 Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
 "For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
 As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
 The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
 And added 'This was cast upon the board,
 When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
 Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; whereupon



"WITH DOWN-DROPT EYES I SAT ALONE."

Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due :
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,

Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tufts of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Here all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnight : one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piracy sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies : and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale

And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labour'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honour,' she said, 'and homage, tax and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowy citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all ;
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbour crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit ; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply.

“ ‘ Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear ;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.’

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said : ‘ I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.

Yet, indeed,

If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, oh ! rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commensure perfect freedom.’

“ Here she ceas'd.

And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, ‘ O Paris,
Give it to Pallas ! ’ but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me !

“ O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder : from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

“ Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, ‘ I promise thee
The fairest and most loving wife in Greece,’
She spoke and laugh'd : I shut my sight for fear :
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower ;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

“ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not fair ?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she ?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My tall dark pines, that plumed the craggy ledge



“A WILD AND WANTON PARD, EYED LIKE THE EVENING STAR.”

High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone *Ænone* see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them ; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slips of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,
Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall,
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change ; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these !
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face ?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight ?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth,
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live :
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids : let me die.

“O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more,
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear

Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born : her child ! — a shudder comes
Across me : never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes !

“ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,
Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armed men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.”

THE SISTERS.

WE were two daughters of one race :
She was the fairest in the face :
The wind is blowing in turret and tree.



“UPON MY LAP HE LAID HIS HEAD.”

They were together, and she fell ;
Therefore revenge became me well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

She died : she went to burning flame :
She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.
Whole weeks and months, and early and late,
To win his love I lay in wait :
O the Earl was fair to see !

I made a feast ; I bad him come ;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and tree.
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head :
O the Earl was fair to see !

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest :
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and tree.
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O the Earl was fair to see !

I rose up in the silent night :
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and tree.
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and thro'.
O the Earl was fair to see !

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was dead.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.

O the Earl was fair to see !

TO —.

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM.

I SEND you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the common earth
Moulded by God, and temper'd with the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART.

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, "O Soul, make merry and carouse,
Dear soul, for all is well."

A huge crag-platform, smooth as burnish'd brass
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself
In her high palace there.

And "while the world runs round and round," I
said,
"Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stedfast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring."

To which my soul made answer readily :
"Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for me,
So royal-rich and wide."

Four courts I made, East, West and South and
North,

In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
The golden gorge of dragons spouted forth
A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there ran a row
Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty woods,
Echoing all night to that sonorous flow
Of spouted fountain-floods.

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
That lent broad verge to distant lands,
Far as the wild swan wings, to where the sky
Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in one swell
Across the mountain stream'd below
In misty folds, that floating as they fell
Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue seem'd
To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
A cloud of incense of all odour steam'd
From out a golden cup.

So that she thought, "And who shall gaze upon
My palace with unblinded eyes,
While this great bow will waver in the sun,
And that sweet incense rise?"

For that sweet incense rose and never fail'd,
And, while day sank or mounted higher,
The light ærial gallery, golden-rail'd,
Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd and traced
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadow'd grotts of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
Thro' which the livelong day my soul did pass,
Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the palace stood,
All various, each a perfect whole
From living Nature, fit for every mood
And change of my still soul.

For some were hung with arras green and blue,
Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
Where with puff'd cheek the belted hunter blew
His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land,
Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry waves.
You seem'd to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves,
Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full fed river winding slow
By herds upon an endless plain,
The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
With shadow-streaks of rain.



“A TRACT OF SAND, AND SOME ONE PACING THERE
ALONE.”

And one, the reapers at their sultry toil.
In front they bound the sheaves. Behind
Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
And hoary to the wind.

And one a foreground black with stones and slags,
Beyond, a line of heights, and higher
All barr'd with long white cloud the scornful crags,
And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twilight pour'd
On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape fair,
As fit for every mood of mind,
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern, was there
Not less than truth design'd.

.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sardonys
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept St. Cecily ;
An angel look'd at her.

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his ear
To list a foot-fall, ere he saw
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops engrail'd,
And many a tract of palm and rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly sail'd
A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew unclasp'd,
From off her shoulder backward borne :
From one hand droop'd a crocus : one hand grasp'd
The mild bull's golden horn.

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone : but every legend fair
Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself, was there,
Not less than life, design'd.

.

Then in the towers I placed great bells that swung,
Moved of themselves, with silver sound ;
And with choice paintings of wise men I hung
The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph strong,
Beside him Shakespeare bland and mild ;
And there the world-worn Dante grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest ;
A million wrinkles carved his skin ;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.



“ A BEAST OF BURDEN SLOW.”

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every land
So wrought, they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads and stings ;
Here play'd a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings ;

Here rose an athlete, strong to break or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod : and those great bells
Began to chime. She took her throne :
She sat betwixt the shining Oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost Oriels' coloured flame
Two godlike faces gazed below ;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names, that in their motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were blazon'd fair
In divers raiment strange :

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber, emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to prolong
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo'd song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone ;

Singing and murmuring in her feastful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, Lord of the visible earth,
Lord of the senses five ;

Communing with herself: " All these are mine,
And let the world have peace or wars,
'Tis one to me." She — when young night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic Heaven ; and clapt her hands and cried,
" I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich, and wide,
Be flatter'd to the height.

" O all things fair to sate my various eyes !
O shapes and hues that please me well !
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell !

" O God-like isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

“ In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and sleep ;
And oft some brainless devil enters in,
And drives them to the deep.”

Then of the mortal instinct would she prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd Fate ;
And at the last she said :

“ I take possession of man's mind and deed.
I care not what the sects may brawl.
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.”

.

Full oft the riddle of the painful earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd : so three years
She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell.

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of Personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she turned her
sight

The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, "Mene, mene," and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her solitude
Fell on her, from which mood was born
Scorn of herself, again, from out that mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

"What! is not this my place of strength," she
said,

"My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones were laid
Since my first memory?"

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares,

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without light
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal.

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,
Left on the shore ; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

A star that with the choral starry dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.
"No voice," she shrieked in that lone hall,
"No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world :
One deep, deep silence all !"

She, mouldering with the dull earth's mouldering
sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with fears,
And ever worse with growing time,
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime :

Shut up as in a trembling tomb, girt round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully sound
Of human footsteps fall.

As in strange lands a traveller walking slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moon-rise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea ;

And knows not if it be thunder, or a sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep cry
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh, " I have found
A new land, but I die."

She howl'd aloud, " I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die ? "

So when four years were wholly finished
She threw her royal robes away.
" Make me a cottage in the vale," she said,
" Where I may mourn and pray.

" Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
So lightly, beautifully built :
Perchance I may return with others there
When I have purged my guilt."

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE.

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :
You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town.
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired :
The daughter of a hundred Earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence I came.
Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that doats on truer charms.
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.



"ARE THERE NO BEGGARS AT YOUR GATE?"

'337)

The lion on your old stone gates .
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my head.
Not thrice your branching limes have blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
Oh your sweet eyes, your low replies :
A great enchantress you may be ;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall :
The guilt of blood is at your door :
You changed a wholesome heart to gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
From yon blue Heavens above us bent

The gardener Adam and his wife
Smile at the claims of long descent.
Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
You pine among your halls and towers :
The languid light of your proud eyes
Is wearied of the rolling hours.
In glowing health, with boundless wealth,
But sickening of a vague disease,
You know so ill to deal with time,
You needs must play such pranks as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
If time be heavy on your hands,
Are there no beggars at your gate,
Nor any poor about your lands ?
Oh ! teach the orphan-boy to read,
Or teach the orphan-girl to sew,
Pray Heaven for a human heart,
And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN.

You must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear ;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
New-year ;
Of all the glad New-year, mother, the maddest
merriest day ;
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

There's many a black black eye, they say, but none
so bright as mine ;
There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and Caro-
line :
But none so fair as little Alice in all the land they
say,
So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I shall never
wake,
If you do not call me loud when the day begins to
break :
But I must gather knots of flowers, and buds and
garlands gay,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye should I
see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the hazel-
tree?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I gave him
yesterday,
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I was all in
white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a flash of
light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not what they
say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

They say he's dying all for love, but that can never
be :
They say his heart is breaking, mother — what is
that to me?
There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me any summer
day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me made
the Queen ;
For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come from
far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n its
wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint sweet
cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire in
swamps and hollows gray,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

The night-winds come and go, mother, upon the
meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to brighten
as they pass ;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole of the
livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green and
still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over all the
hill,

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily glance
and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me early,
mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all the glad
New-year :
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest merri-
est day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother, I'm to be
Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

If you're waking call me early, call me early,
mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall ever see,
Then you may lay me low i' the mould and think no
more of me.

To-night I saw the sun set: he set and left behind
The good old year, the dear old time, and all my
peace of mind ;
And the New-year's coming up, mother, but I shall
never see
The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon the
tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers: we had a
merry day ;
Beneath the hawthorn on the green they made me
Queen of May ;
And we danced about the may-pole and in the hazel
copse,
Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall white
chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the frost is on
the pane :

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come again :
I wish the snow would melt and the sun come out
on high :

I long to see a flower so before the day I die.

The building rook 'ill caw from the windy tall elm-
tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the fallow lea,
And the swallow 'll come back again with summer
o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within the mouldering
grave.

Upon the chancel-casement, and upon that grave of
mine,

In the early early morning the summer sun 'ill shine,
Before the red cock crows from the farm upon the
hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother, and all the
world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother, beneath the
waning light

You'll never see me more in the long gray fields at
night ;

When from the dry dark wold the summer airs blow
cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass, and the bul-
rush in the pool.

You'll bury me, my mother, just beneath the haw-
thorn shade,
And you'll come sometimes and see me where I am
lowly laid.
I shall not forget you, mother, I shall hear you
when you pass,
With your feet above my head in the long and
pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll forgive
me now ;
You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive me ere
I go ;
Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let your grief be
wild.
You should not fret for me, mother, you have an-
other child.

If I can I'll come again, mother, from out my rest-
ing-place ;
Tho' you'll not see me, mother, I shall look upon
your face ;
Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall harken what
you say,
And be often, often with you when you think I'm
far away.

Goodnight, goodnight, when I have said goodnight
for evermore,
And you see me carried out from the threshold of
the door ;

Don't let Effie come to see me till my grave be
growing green :
She'll be a better child to you than ever I have been.

She'll find my garden-tools upon the granary floor :
Let her take 'em : they are hers : I shall never garden
more :
But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the rosebush
that I set
About the parlour-window and the box of mignon-
ette.

Goodnight, sweet mother : call me before the day
is born.
All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep at morn ;
But I would see the sun rise upon the glad New-
year.
So, if you're waking, call me, call me early, mother
dear.

CONCLUSION.

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and yet alive I am ;
And in fields all around I hear the bleating of the
lamb.

How sadly, I remember, rose the morning of the
year !

To die before the snowdrop came, and now the
violet's here.

O sweet is the new violet, that comes beneath the
skies,

And sweeter is the young lamb's voice to me that
cannot rise,

And sweet is all the land about, and all the flowers
that blow,

And sweeter far is death than life to me that long
to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to leave the
blessed sun,

And now it seems as hard to stay, and yet His will
be done !

But still I think it can't be long before I find re-
lease ;

And that good man, the clergyman, has told me
words of peace.



- All in the mad March-morning I
heard the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and
the dark was over all.



11. 11. 11

O blessings on his kindly voice and on his silver
hair !

And blessings on his whole life long, until he meet
me there !

O blessings on his kindly heart and on his silver
head !

A thousand times I blest him, as he knelt beside
my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he show'd me all
the sin.

Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late, there's One
will let me in :

Nor would I now be well, mother, again if that
could be,

For my desire is but to pass to Him that died for
me.

I did not hear the dog howl, mother, or the death-
watch beat,

There came a sweeter token when the night and
morning meet :

But sit beside my bed, mother, and put your hand
in mine,

And Effie on the other side, and I will tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard the angels
call ;

It was when the moon was setting, and the dark
was over all ;

The trees began to whisper, and the wind began to
roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard them call
my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of you and Effie
dear ;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I no longer
here ;
With all my strength I pray'd for both, and so I
felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music on the
wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my
bed,
And then did something speak to me — I know not
what was said ;
For great delight and shuddering took hold of all
my mind,
And up the valley came again the music on the
wind.

But you were sleeping ; and I said, "It's not for
them : it's mine."
And if it comes three times, I thought, I take it for
a sign.
And once again it came, and close beside the win-
dow-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to Heaven and die
among the stars.

So now I think my time is near. I trust it is. I
know
The blessed music went that way my soul will have
to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I go to-day.
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when I am past
away.

And say to Robin a kind word. and tell him not to
fret ;
There's many a worthier than I, would make him
happy yet.
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might have been
his wife ;
But all these things have ceased to be, with my
desire of life.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the Heavens are in
a glow ;
He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of them I
know.
And there I move no longer now, and there his
light may shine —
Wild flowers in the valley for other hands than
mine.

O sweet and strange it seems to me, that ere this
day is done
The voice, that now is speaking, may be beyond
the sun —

For ever and for ever with those just souls and
true —

And what is life, that we should moan? why make
we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed home —

And there to wait a little while till you and Effie
come —

To lie within the light of God, as I lie upon your
breast —

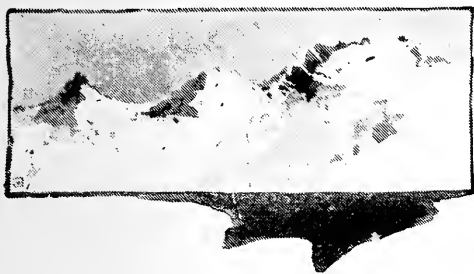
And the wicked cease from troubling, and the
weary are at rest.

THE LOTOS-EATERS.

“COURAGE!” he said, and pointed toward the land,
“This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon.”
In the afternoon they came unto a land
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon ;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams ! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go ;
And some thro' wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land : far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd : and, dew'd with showery
drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low adown
In the red West : thro' mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Border'd with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale ;
A land where all things always seem'd the same !
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.



"THREE SILENT PINNACLES OF AGED SNOW."

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores ; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave ;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore ;
And sweet it was to dream of Fatherland,
Of child, and wife, and slave ; but evermore
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, " We will return no more ;"
And all at once they sang, " Our Island home
Is far beyond the wave ; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG.

I.

THERE is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass ;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tir'd eyelids upon tir'd eyes ;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful
 skies.

Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.

II.

Why are we weigh'd upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest : why should we toil alone,
We only toil who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown :
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,

Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm ;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
" There is no joy but calm ! "
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of
things?

III.

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is woo'd from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV.

Hateful is the dark blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark blue-sea.
Death is the end of life ; ah, why
Should life all labour be ?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.

Let us alone. What is it that will
last?

All things are taken from us, and
become

Portions and parcels of the dreadful
Past.

Let us alone. What pleasure can
we have

To war with evil? Is there any
peace

In ever climbing up the climbing
wave?

All things have rest, and ripen
toward the grave

In silence ; ripen, fall and cease :

Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful
ease.



"DEATH IS THE END OF
LIFE."

V.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream !
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height ;
To hear each other's whisper'd speech ;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray ;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy ;

To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass !

VI.

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears : but all hath suffer'd change :
For surely now our household hearths are cold :
Our sons inherit us : our looks are strange :
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle ?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile :
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto aged breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out by many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

VII.

But propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelid still,
Beneath a Heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill —
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave thro' the thick-twined vine —
To watch the emerald-colour'd water falling
Thro' many a wov'n acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out beneath the
 pine.

VIII.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak :
The Lotos blows by every winding creek :
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone :
Thro' every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-
 dust is blown.

We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard, when the
 surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-
 fountains in the sea.

Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal
mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like Gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are
hurl'd
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are
lightly curl'd
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleam-
ing world :
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted
lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring
deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking
ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a dole-
ful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of
wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning tho' the words are
strong ;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave
the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring
toil,
Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and
oil ;
Till they perish and they suffer — some, 'tis whis-
per'd — down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys
dwell,

Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the
 shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave
 and oar ;
Oh rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander
 more.



A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN.

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their shade,
“ *The Legend of Good Women*,” long ago
Sung by the morning star of song, who made
His music heard below ;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of his art
Held me above the subject, as strong gales
Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho’ my heart,
Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears. In every land
I saw, wherever light illumineth,
Beauty and anguish walking hand in hand
The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient song
Peopled the hollow dark, like burning stars,
And I heard sounds of insult, shame, and wrong,
And trumpets blown for wars ;

And clattering flints batter'd with clanging hoofs ;
And I saw crowds in column'd sanctuaries ;
And forms that pass'd at windows and on roofs
Of marble palaces ;

Corpses across the threshold ; heroes tall
Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the wall ;
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with heated blasts
That run before the fluttering tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in brazen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water, divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as, when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray.

I started once, or seem'd to start in pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove to speak,
As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,

That bore a lady from a leaguer'd town ;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-lapsing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges, and did creep
Roll'd on each other, rounded, smooth'd, and
brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd far
In an old wood : fresh-wash'd in coolest dew
The maiden splendours of the morning star
Shook in the stedfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree-boles did stoop and lean
Upon the dusky brushwood underneath
Their broad curved branches, fledged with clearest
green,
New from its silken sheath.

The dim red morn had died, her journey done,
And with dead lips smiled at the twilight plain,
Half-fall'n across the threshold of the sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead air,
Not any song of bird or sound of rill ;
Gross darkness of the inner sepulchre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jasmine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to tree,

And at the root thro' lush green grasses burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves, I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks drench'd in
dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and frame
The times when I remember to have been
Joyful and free from blame.

And from within me a clear under-tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that unblissful clime,
"Pass freely thro' : the wood is all thine own,
Until the end of time."

At length I saw a lady within call,
Stillter than chisell'd marble standing there ;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with surprise
Froze my swift speech : she turning on my face
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place.

"I had great beauty : ask thou not my name :
No one can be more wise than destiny.

Many drew swords and died. Where'er I came
I brought calamity."

"No marvel, sovereign lady : in fair field
Myself for such a face had boldly died,"
I answer'd free ; and turning I appeal'd
To one that stood beside.

But she, with sick and scornful looks averse,
To her full height her stately stature draws ;
"My youth," she said, "was blasted with a curse :
This woman was the cause.

"I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron years :
My father held his hand upon his face ;
I, blinded with my tears,

"Still strove to speak : my voice was thick with
sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could descry
The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

"The high masts flicker'd as they lay afloat ;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd, and the shore ;
The bright death quiver'd at the victim's throat ;
Touch'd ; and I knew no more."

Whereto the other with a downward brow :
"I would the white cold heavy-plunging foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me deep below,
Then when I left my home."

Her slow full words sank thro' the silence drear,
As thunder drops fall on a sleeping sea :
Sudden I heard a voice that cried, "Come here,
That I may look on thee."

I turning saw, throned on a fiery rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf unroll'd ;
A queen, with swarthy cheeks and bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile, began :
"I govern'd men by change, and so I sway'd
All moods. 'Tis long since I have seen a man.
Once, like the moon, I made

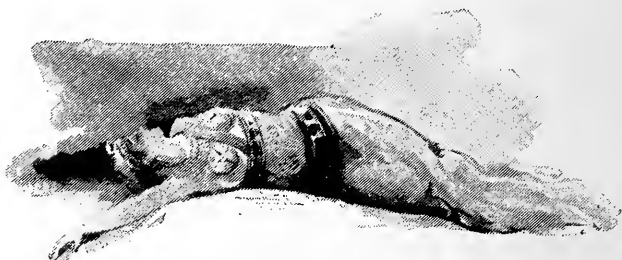
"The ever-shifting currents of the blood
According to my humour ebb and flow.
I have no men to govern in this wood :
That makes my only woe.

"Nay — yet it chafes me that I could not bend
One will ; nor tame and tutor with mine eye
That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Prythee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony ?

"The man, my lover, with whom I rode sublime
On Fortune's neck : we sat as God by God :
The Nilus would have risen before his time
And flooded at our nod.

“ We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep, and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus. O my life
In Egypt ! O the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

“ And the wild kiss, when fresh from war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony,
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my arms,
Contented there to die !



“ I DIED A QUEEN.”

“ And there he died : and when I heard my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not brook my fear
Of the other : with a worm I balk'd his fame.
What else was left ? look here ! ”

(With that she tore her robe apart, and half
The polish'd argent of her breast to sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite.)

“I died a Queen. The Roman soldier found
Me lying dead, my crown about my brows,
A name for ever! — lying robed and crown’d,
Worthy a Roman spouse.”

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest range
Struck by all passion, did fall down and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro’ all change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for delight ;
Because with sudden motion from the ground
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill’d with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his keenest darts ;
As once they drew into two burning rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I heard
A noise of some one coming thro’ the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested bird
That claps his wings at dawn.

“The torrent brooks of hallow’d Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro’ the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

“The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with beams
divine :
All night the splinter'd crags that wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.”

As one that museth where broad sunshine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro' the door
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd and tied
To where he stands, — so stood I, when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that died
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
A maiden pure : as when she went along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with welcome light,
With timbrel and with song.

My words leapt forth : “Heaven heads the count of
crimes
With that wild oath.” She render'd answer high :
“Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand times
I would be born and die.”

“Single I grew, like some green plant, whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

“ My God, my land, my father — these did move
Me from my bliss of life, that Nature gave,
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord of love
Down to a silent grave.

“ And I went mourning, ‘ No fair Hebrew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame among
The Hebrew mothers ’ — emptied of all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

‘ Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that glow
Beneath the battled tower.

“ The light white cloud swam over us. Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

“ Saw God divide the night with flying flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief became
A solemn scorn of ills.

“ When the next moon was roll'd into the sky,
Strength came to me that equall'd my desire.
How beautiful a thing it was to die
For God and for my sire !

“It comforts me in this one thought to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father’s will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

“Moreover it is written that my race
Hew’d Ammon, hip and thigh, from Aroer



“WHEN MIDNIGHT BELLS CEASE RINGING SUDDENLY.”

On Arnion unto Minneth.” Here her face
Glow’d, as I look’d at her.

She lock’d her lips : she left me where I stood :
“Glory to God,” she sang, and past afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively,
As one that from a casement leans his head,
When midnight bells cease ringing suddenly,
And the old year is dead.

“Alas ! alas !” a low voice, full of care,
Murmur’d beside me : “Turn and look on me :
I am that Rosamond, whom men call fair,
If what I was I be.

“Would I had been some maiden coarse and poor !
O me, that I should ever see the light !
Those dragon eyes of anger’d Eleanor
Do hunt me, day and night.”

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope and trust :
To whom the Egyptian : “O, you tamely died !
You should have clung to Fulvia’s waist, and thrust
The dagger thro’ her side.”

With that sharp sound the white dawn’s creeping
beams,
Stol’n to my brain, dissolved the mystery
Of folded sleep. The captain of my dreams
Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden’d on the borders of the dark,
Ere I saw her, who clasp’d in her last trance
Her murder’d father’s head, or Joan of Arc,
A light of ancient France ;

Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring.

No memory labours longer from the deep
Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore
That glimpses, moving up, than I from sleep
To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With what dull pain
Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to strike
Into that wondrous track of dreams again !
But no two dreams are like.

As when a soul laments, which hath been blest,
Desiring what is mingled with past years,
In yearnings that can never be exprest
By signs or groans or tears ;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with choicest art,
Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD.

O BLACKBIRD ! sing me something well :
While all the neighbours shoot thee round,
I keep smooth plats of fruitful ground,
Where thou may'st warble, eat and dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
Are thine ; the range of lawn and park :
The unnetted black-hearts ripen dark,
All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
With that gold dagger of thy bill
To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill ! the silver tongue,
Cold February loved, is dry :
Plenty corrupts the melody
That made thee famous once, when young.

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning ! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are new,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR.

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily sighing :
Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.

Old year, you must not die ;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still : he doth not move :
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.

Old year, you must not go ;
So long as you have been with us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
A jollier year we shall not see.

But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
We did so laugh and cry with you,
I've half a mind to die with you,
Old year, if you must die.

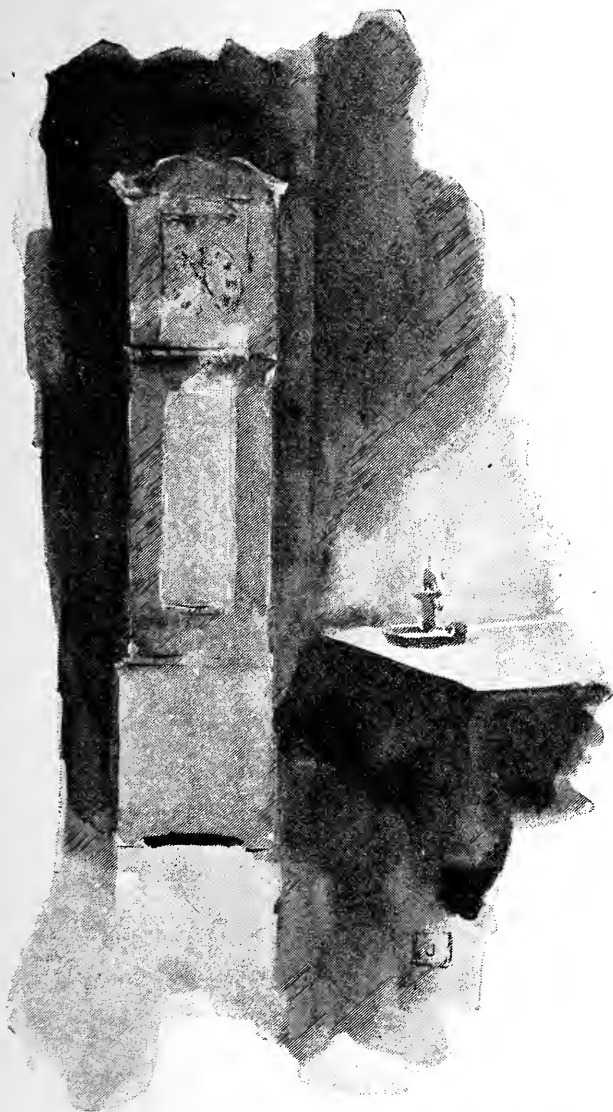
He was full of joke and jest,
But all his merry quips are o'er
To see him die, across the waste
His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
The night is starry and cold, my friend,
And the New-year blithe and bold, my friend,
Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
I heard just now the crowing cock.
The shadows flicker to and fro :
The cricket chirps : the light burns low :
'Tis nearly twelve o'clock.

Shake hands, before you die.
Old year, we'll dearly rue for you :
What is it we can do for you ?
Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
Alack ! our friend is gone.



"THE LIGHT BURNS LOW: 'TIS NEARLY TWELVE O'CLOCK."

Close up his eyes : tie up his chin :
Step from the corpse, and let him in
That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.

There's a new foot on the floor, my friend,
And a new face at the door, my friend,
A new face at the door.

•

TO J. S.

THE wind, that beats the mountain, blows
More softly round the open wold,
And gently comes the world to those
That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
Or else I had not dared to flow
In these words toward you, and invade
Even with a verse your holy woe.

'Tis strange that those we lean on most,
Those in whose laps our limbs are nursed,
Fall into shadow, soonest lost :
Those we love first are taken first.

God gives us love. Something to love
He lends us ; but, when love is grown
To ripeness, that on which it throve
Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
Once thro' mine own doors Death did pass ;
One went, who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
Once more. Two years his chair is seen
Empty before us. That was he
Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star
Rose with you thro' a little arc
Of Heaven, nor having wander'd far
Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother : his mute dust
I honour and his living worth :
A man more pure and bold and just
Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh,
Since that dear soul hath fall'n asleep.
Great Nature is more wise than I :
I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
Drawn from the spirit thro' the brain,
I will not even preach to you,
“ Weep, weeping dulls the inward pain.”

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
She loveth her own anguish deep
More than much pleasure. Let her will
Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, “ God's ordinance
Of Death is blown in every wind ; ”
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in Heaven half the night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her throat
Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you anyway,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say :

For he too was a friend to me :
Both are my friends, and my true breast
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would make
Grief more. 'Twere better I should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace :
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons increase,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or strange.
Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of change.

ON A MOURNER.

I.

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face
To every land beneath the skies,



"THE SWAMP."

Counts nothing that she meets with base,
But lives and loves in every place ;

II.

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where hums the dropping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

III.

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, "Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime."

IV.

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V.

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind forlorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them born.

VI.

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII.

Promising empire ; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

“YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO’ ILL AT EASE.”

YOU ask me, why, tho’ ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where freedom slowly broadens down
From precedent to precedent :

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive thought
Hath time and space to work and spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute ;

Tho' Power should make from land to land
The name of Britain trebly great —
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden sand —

Yet waft me from the harbour-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.



"THE PALMS AND TEMPLES OF THE SOUTH."

“OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE
HEIGHTS.”

OF old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet :
Above her shook the starry lights :
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,
But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face —

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, God-like, grasps the triple forks,
And, King-like, wears the crown :

Her open eyes desire the truth.

 The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
 Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
 Make bright our days and light our dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
 The falsehood of extremes !

“LOVE THOU THY LAND.”

LOVE thou thy land, with love far-brought
From out the storied Past, and used
Within the Present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of thought.

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen, friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the winds ;
But let her herald, Reverence, fly
Before her to whatever sky
Bear seed of men and growth of minds.

Watch what main-currents draw the years :
Cut Prejudice against the grain :
But gentle words are always gain :
Regard the weakness of thy peers :

Nor toil for title, place or touch,
Of pension, neither count on praise :
It grows to guerdon after-days :
Nor deal in watch-words overmuch :

Not clinging to some ancient saw ;
Not master'd by some modern term ;
Not swift nor slow to change, but firm :
And in its season bring the law ;

That from Discussion's lip may fall
With Life, that, working strongly, binds —
Set in all lights by many minds,
To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
And moist and dry, devising long,
Thro' many agents making strong,
Matures the individual form.

Meet is it changes should control
Our being, lest we rust in ease.
We all are changed by still degrees,
All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be free
To ingroove itself with that which flies,

And work, a joint of state, that plies
Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying, hard to shape in act ;
For all the past of Time reveals
A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Ev'n now we hear with inward strife
A motion toiling in the gloom —
The Spirit of the years to come
Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
Completion in a painful school ;
Phantoms of other forms of rule,
New Majesties of mighty States —

The warders of the growing hour,
But vague in vapour, hard to mark ;
And round them sea and air are dark
With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
Is bodied forth the second whole.
Regard gradation, lest the soul
Of Discord race the rising wind ;

A wind to puff your idol-fires,
And heap their ashes on the head ;
To shame the boast so often made,
That we are wiser than our sires.

Oh yet, if Nature's evil star
Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
To follow flying steps of Truth
Across the brazen bridge of war —

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
Must ever shock, like armed foes,
And this be true, till Time shall close,
That Principles are rain'd in blood ;

Not yet the wise of heart would cease
To hold his hope thro' shame and guilt,
But with his hand against the hilt,
Would pace the troubled land, like Peace ;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
Would serve his kind in deed and word,
Certain, if knowledge bring the sword,
That knowledge takes the sword away —

Would love the gleams of good that broke
From either side, nor veil his eyes :
And if some dreadful need should rise
Would strike, and firmly, and one stroke :

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
As we bear blossom of the dead ;
Earn well the thrifty months, nor wed
Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay,

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782.

O THOU, that sendest out the man
To rule by land and sea,
Strong mother of a Lion-line,
Be proud of those strong sons of thine
Who wrench'd their rights from thee !

What wonder, if in noble heat
Those men thine arms withstood,
Retaught the lesson thou hadst taught,
And in thy spirit with thee fought —
Who sprang from English blood !

But Thou rejoice with liberal joy,
Lift up thy rocky face,
And shatter, when the storms are black,
In many a streaming torrent back,
The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law
The growing world assume,
Thy work is thine — The single note
From that deep chord which Hampden smote
Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE.

I KNEW an old wife
lean and poor,
Her rags scarce held
together ;
There strode a stranger
to the door,
And it was windy
weather.

He held a goose upon
his arm,
He utter'd rhyme
and reason,
"Here, take the goose,
and keep you
warm,
It is a stormy sea-
son."

She caught the white
goose by the leg,
A goose — 'twas no
great matter.
The goose let fall a
golden egg
With cackle and with
clatter.



"I KNEW AN OLD WIFE LEAN AND POOR"

She dropt the goose, and caught the pelf,
And ran to tell her neighbours ;
And bless'd herself, and cursed herself,
And rested from her labours.

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able bodied ;
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder :
But ah ! the more the white goose laid
It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there ;
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle :
She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

“ A quinsy choke thy cursed note ! ”
Then wax'd her anger stronger.
“ Go, take the goose and wring her throat,
I will not bear it longer.”

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the cat ;
Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew that,
And fill'd the house with clamour.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather :

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning :
"So keep you cold, or keep you warm,
It is a stormy morning."

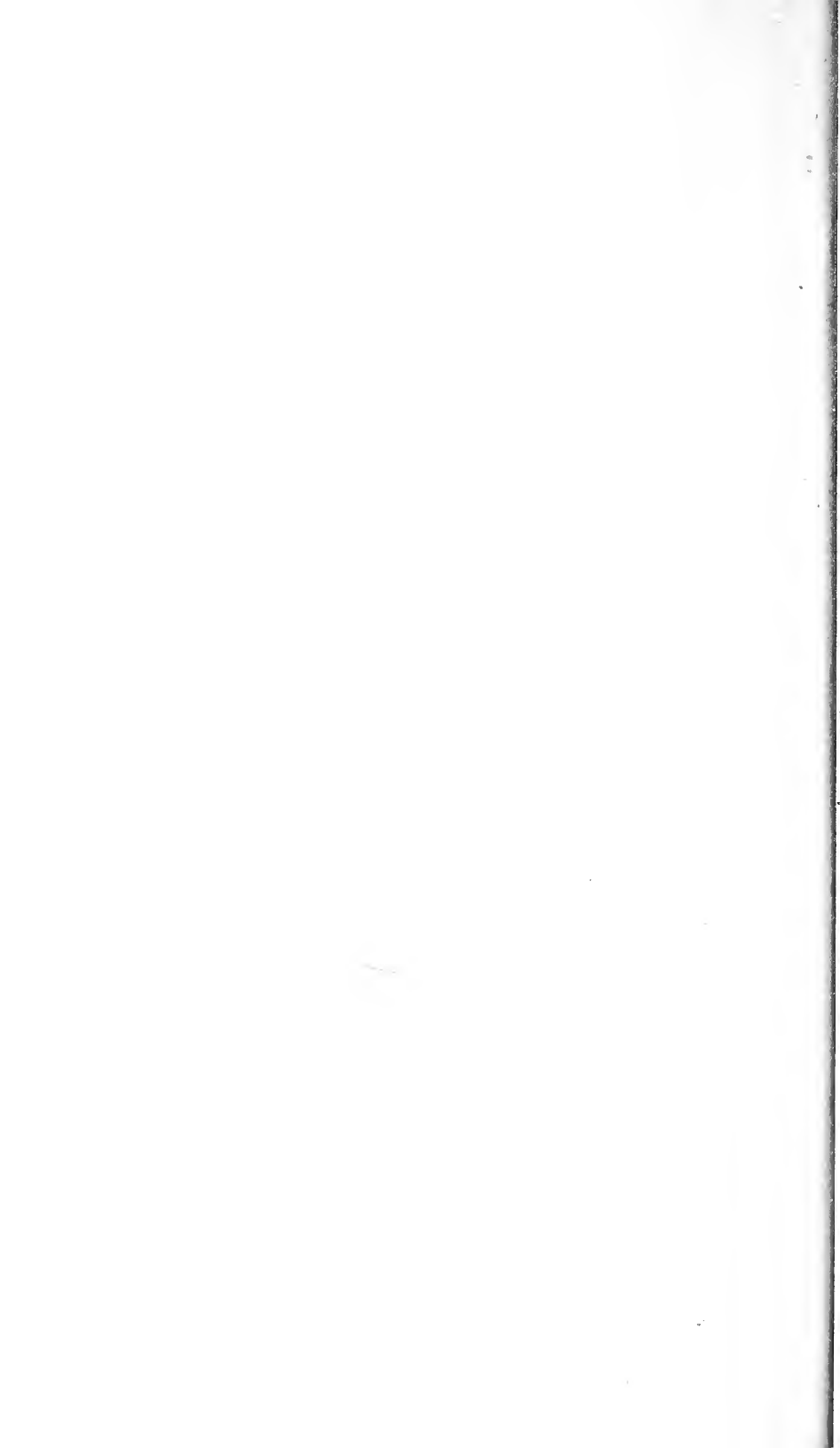
The wild wind rang from park and plain,
And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled:

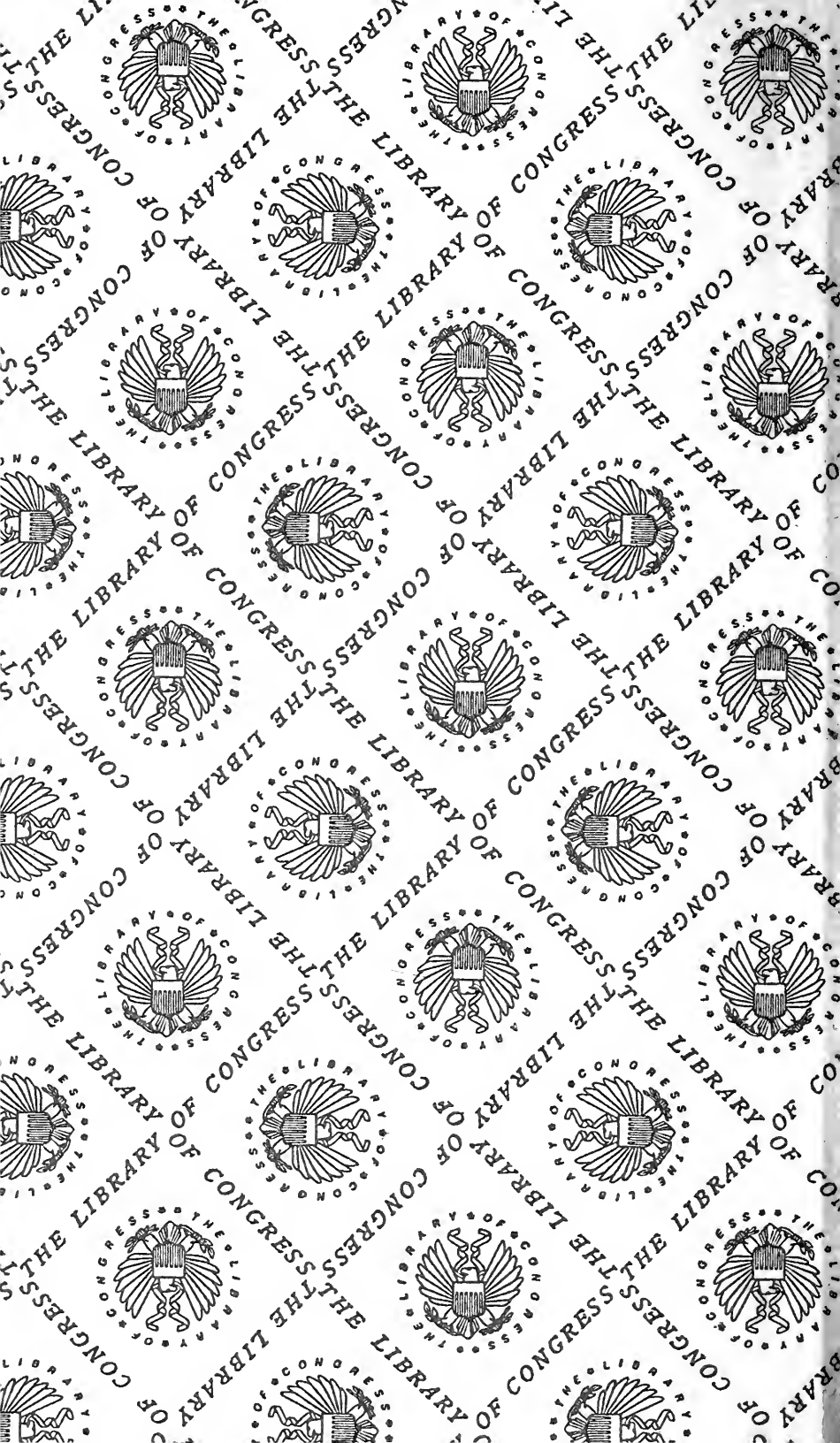
The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew up,
And a whirlwind clear'd the larder :

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, "The Devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger !"









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